SECRETS OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING

EDWARD - LEIGH - PELL

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By
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Preface

IN this book I have tried to point out as plainly as I know how the fundamental principles underlying successful teaching, together with the hundred and one practical methods that successful teachers have developed therefrom.

In the matter of methods I have tried to avoid extremes. I have long recognized the fact that a method is not good because it is new, nor bad because it is old. Every method must stand on its merits, not on its years. If grandfather's sword is eaten through with rust let us not carry it into battle; but if it is a tried and true Damascus blade it should not be discarded for one of your modern make that may be as brittle as it is bright. If our fathers knew how to produce better spiritual fibre than we are producing there is little reason for turning up our noses at old fogy ways. And if the old-time Sunday-schools made rock foundations of faith for the strong men and women of today, there may be something in their methods not too moldy for use.

But I have tried not to lay too much stress on methods. The supreme need of the average

Sunday-school teacher is not a method of work but a motive for work. Pour a note-book full of new methods into a cold brain and they will accomplish about as much as a tank full of cold water emptied into a cold engine. You've got to have fire beneath the water. You've got to get a motive that will kindle a fire in your heart beneath your brain.

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I

WHAT THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL IS FOR

THE Sunday-school is not something apart from the church. Nor is it a part of the church. Nor is it an appendix to the church. It is the church itself organized for a specific purpose. That purpose is not to conduct a day-school on Sunday. It is not to conduct a theological school. It is not solely to impart religious knowledge. It is not solely to teach the Bible. The aim of the church organized into a Sunday-school is the development of character by means of the study of the Word of God. It is designed for every man, woman and child who has not attained unto the perfect image of Christ. That is to say, it is designed for every man, woman and child in the church, and whom the church can reach. Its chief text-book is the Bible, because the Bible is the Word of God, not because the Bible contains good history or good literature. It has to do with the facts of the Bible simply because these facts are vehicles of the truth. By the truth I mean the sum of God's revelations to men;—all that He has revealed

to us in His Word about Himself and about His will concerning us;—the light He has given us by which we may find our way to Him. The main business of the Sunday-school is with this light. It has no more to do with the facts of the Bible apart from the light which they shed on God and God's will than it has to do with the facts of secular history. It is no more concerned with the story of David and Goliath, for example, apart from its religious teachings than it is concerned about the newspaper accounts of the last prize-fight. Its business is to teach, not merely in order that its pupils may know something, important as the knowledge may be, but in order that they may be something and do something. It does not undervalue *knowing*, but it places the emphasis upon *being*.

It has been quite the thing in recent years to magnify the Sunday-school as an educational institution pure and simple, and many very intelligent persons have been led to expect great things from it as such. In their desire to get away from the old error of trying to reach the heart without due regard for the mind, many teachers have swung to the opposite extreme of trying to reach the mind without concern for the heart. These good people tell us that the chief business of the Sunday-school is to train and store the minds of children by and with

religious knowledge in the same way that a public school trains and stores the minds of the children by and with secular knowledge. They tell us that the Sunday-school has been largely a failure because it has ignored educational methods, and that if it is to be a success it must be organized and equipped as far as possible like any other school. "Give us trained teachers and a graded lesson system and a modern plant," they tell us, "and the problem will be solved." And here and there the trained teachers and the graded lesson system and the modern plant have been furnished, and great expectations have been raised—and the problem is still unsolved. Some report results, some report no results, comparatively few report the expected results. Somehow as a purely educational institution the Sunday-school does not turn out a brilliant success.

And why should it? Would a public school turn out a brilliant success on thirty minutes a week? Would a public school teacher undertake to train and store the minds of your children on thirty minutes a week? We might as well quit expecting the impossible. As a mind-training, mind-filling institution the Sunday-school, however well equipped it may be, cannot accomplish in thirty minutes what the public school undertakes to accomplish in twenty-five hours.

But do not let me be misunderstood. I do not undervalue trained teachers, pedagogical methods and modern plants. I believe in them. I believe that the teachers of the past as a rule gave too little attention to the mind. Sometimes, indeed, they ignored it altogether. But what I want to emphasize is the fact that trained teachers and pedagogical methods and modern plants *alone* do not and cannot make a Sunday-school. They cannot make a school that will bring forth the fruit the Sunday-school is designed to bring forth. The great business of the Sunday-school is to bring the pupils in contact with the Word of God, and *in contact with a teacher whose life has been transformed by that Word*, with the hope that from the pages of the printed book, or from the hand-touch or heart-touch of the teacher, there may find its way into the heart of the pupil that which will transform his life and develop him into a man like unto the Man of Galilee. If a Sunday-school succeeds in imparting vital, transforming truth it is a success; if it fails to impart vital, transforming truth it is a failure.

What then do I think of trained teachers and graded lessons and modern plants? I think they are of value just in so far as they help the Sunday-school in its chief business of imparting vital, transforming truth, and no further. Other things being equal they are

helpful—exceedingly helpful—but they are not the fundamental things, and if we look to them alone or chiefly for great results we shall be disappointed. I could tell you of a holy woman who has been instrumental in the development of more boys into Christian men than any dozen trained teachers I know, and she does not know pedagogy from a potato. Doubtless she would have done still better if she had been trained for her work, but no amount of training can take the place of that essential thing which has made her the most successful Sunday-school teacher in her community. Let us have trained teachers by all means, provided they have that essential thing—provided they are living epistles of Christ written so plainly that little children can read them in their eyes and in their hand-touch; provided love has given them the touch of the artist that will enable them to mold the little rosy lumps of clay placed in their hands in the image of the Christ who lives in their hearts.

II

WHAT THE TEACHER IS FOR

I HAVE just compared the teacher at work to an artist engaged in molding a lump of clay. Of course if the word *molding* is taken in the restricted sense in which it is ordinarily used such a comparison would not be proper. The wise teacher does not take his pupil in hand as an artist takes a lump of lifeless clay to do with it as he will; rather he approaches his pupil as a gardener approaches a tender plant to aid and encourage and direct its growth. But it should be remembered that the gardener takes a hand in the shaping of the plant and does not leave it wholly to development from within. He follows Nature, which does not leave the shaping of plants wholly to growth from within but aids in the shaping by bringing to bear upon them certain forces or influences from without. So then while the teacher is not a molder of lifeless clay (it would be criminal for him to undertake to shape a child according to his own pleasure to the destruction of the child's initiative and personality), he is a molder of *living* clay as the gardener is a molder of living plants; and with

this explanation I shall continue to use this term as most convenient for my purpose.

If you should go to a school of art and your teacher should place in your hands a lump of clay and tell you to mold it, your first duty would be to settle clearly in your mind just what you would try to mold. You know that you would never make anything worth speaking of if you did not settle that matter and settle it at the beginning. So if God has placed in your hands a half-dozen little roseate lumps of living clay, and told you to mold them for Him, your first duty would be to settle clearly in your mind just what God expects you to make of them. If you take the lump of clay from your art teacher's hands, and begin to press in here and to press out there without thought or design, you will never make anything either of the clay or of yourself, and you will have to answer for the precious moments which you have frittered away in your random molding. And if you take these little rosy lumps from God's hands—these half a dozen pupils that have been tolled off for your class—and begin your work with them without thought or design, without having a single clear notion of what you want to accomplish, you will not make anything either of them or of yourself, and you will have to answer not only for the precious moments which you may have

frittered away, but also for the precious lumps of living clay which you may mar in your thoughtless handling.

What does God want me to do with these living, throbbing, pliable little lumps of human clay which He has placed in my hands? This is the question you want to answer—and without making yourself miserable over it. Does He simply want me to see to it that they are kept as they are and not permitted to be marred? This is what some good people you and I know seem to think. You know they never have any higher ambition than just to keep their pupils from drifting downward. It is not a question of lifting them up, but of keeping them out of the ditch—of keeping them respectable and thereby preserving the self-respect of the teacher.

Perhaps you have noticed that there are two kinds of teachers: those who are trying to save their pupils and those who are trying to save their self-respect.

Whatsoever God may have intended when He placed those pupils in my hands, I may be sure that He did not intend to deposit them in a safety vault. He never gave a teacher a talent to bury in a napkin.

I do not need a revelation to make it plain that when an unformed, pliable living thing is placed in my hands it is placed there for me to

mold it—to use this term again in its broadest sense. The children that have been given me have been given me to mold. To mold into what? you ask. Into men and women? Yes; but not any sort of men and women, or your sort of men and women. This is a matter which God never leaves to us. He may be willing that we may have our own notions about some things, but He is not willing that we may have our own notions about these children that He has given us to mold. The great Master-teacher would never have placed a pupil in my hands if He had not already prepared a Pattern for me to work by. God does not want us to mold children into men and women just to be molding them into men and women. He wants us to mold them after a certain pattern, because He loves these children enough to desire the best for them, and because He loves His own Son so much that He is not willing that these children shall be molded by any other pattern than that of His Son.

And so we have our question answered for us. God has given us these children to mold and He has given us a Pattern along with them. "Strive to make these children like My Son." This is our great order from our Commander—our Master-teacher.

But how shall I mold this child that has been placed in my hands into the image of

Christ? In the first place I must win his attention to Christ. I must get him to thinking about Christ. This is not the work of one Sunday or of a month. It may prove to be the work of years. For, to begin with, I must first win his attention to myself. This does not merely mean getting a pupil to listen to what I am talking about. A child may listen to what I am talking about and not be interested in me, but if he is interested in me he may be easily interested in what I am talking about. If you are going to lead that wild, frisky pony yonder to water you must first get hold of him and bind him to yourself. And if you are going to lead a child to Christ you must first get hold of him and bind him to yourself. You do not think it wasted time to cultivate the acquaintance of the pony who is afraid to let you come near him. You cannot spend your time better at the beginning of your work than by cultivating these little ones who, as yet, are unwilling for you to come near them.

It is not easy to lay down rules for this sort of thing. Some teachers win the hearts and minds of their pupils without knowing how they do it. Some teachers spend their lives in an unsuccessful effort to win their pupils by main strength and awkwardness. The best way to win a child is to win him. The best way to get near to a child is to get near to him.

Cultivate your love for children—not for ideal childhood, but for real flesh and blood children; not for the idealized child—the pretty poem of a child with eyes of unfathomable azure—but for the real child; the besmeared child; the homely child; the outwardly repulsive child. Your love is not a love for children until you can get behind the besmeared face deep down into the unsmeared heart. You would be surprised to know how much a matter of habit it may be. I found my love for children growing luke-warm, and I deliberately formed the habit of interesting myself in every child I met. There is nothing like it. Walk the streets with an eye for children. Look straight into the eyes of every child you meet—attractive or unattractive; pink and white babe or repulsive street urchin. Look straight into his eyes, and with your own send him a bit of a wireless message, and you will soon find your heart warming towards every child in the world. You want to love a child not because he is this or that sort of a child, but because he is yet an unformed, pliable lump of human clay capable of being molded by the grace of God into the image of Him who is the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

III

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

ARE we getting at the heart of the matter? That is the question. Are we getting at the heart of the matter in the Sunday-school? We are doing things—ever so many things—doing them vigorously,—but are we doing the things that tell? We are getting results, but are we getting the results that are worth while? We have remodelled the Sunday-school room, and put in a new carpet, and put little chairs in the primary department so that the babies can rest their feet on the floor, and we have graded the school, and we have a new order of exercises, and a lot of new millinery and flummery and all that; but are we getting at the heart of the matter? Are we reaching the hearts of our pupils? Have we any other mission than to reach the hearts of our pupils, and if these things that we are doing are not reaching their hearts are they worth while? Is the game worth the candle? Is it worth the trouble of having a Sunday-school if we cannot report anything but a good attendance and a pleasant time?

How shall we reach the hearts of our pupils? We are given to saying that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. We don't quite believe it when we say it, but some of us really imagine that the way to a child's heart is through picnics and Easter egg-hunts, and pretty cards with little stars sewed on them, and ribbons and tinsel and all sorts of gew-gaws. These things win a child's attention but they do not reach his heart. It takes heart to reach heart. You may reach a child's heart with your heart through your hand-touch, through love-warmed lips, through love-lit eyes. You may reach a child's heart with God's heart by laying the Word which comes from God's heart on the child's mind. If you are not reaching the hearts of your pupils in either of these ways you are not reaching them: there is no other way.

How can I lay the Word of God on the minds of my pupils so that it may find its way down into their hearts? In the first place, I must get possession of the Word myself. I cannot lay it on the mind of the pupil if I do not have it on my own mind. I must possess the Truth—God's revelation of Himself. Moreover, that Word is not likely to find its way down into the heart of the pupil unless it has found its way into my own heart. I must not only possess the Truth but the Truth must pos-

sess me. And I am not going to get possession of it by looking up the subject and the Golden Text on the way to Sunday-school. If I am going to put anything into the minds of my pupils I must have something in my own mind, and if I am going to fill up my own mind I must go to work and dig it out of my Bible with the aid of the best lesson helps I can find. If I had to teach a class about baseball next Sunday, and I knew nothing more about it than the average man knows about his Bible would I buy a half-cent leaflet of instructions about baseball, and take it home and put it away and forget it, and go spinning around in search of it Sunday morning, and hurriedly read it over as I hurried up the street to Sunday-school? Wouldn't I be ashamed to go before that class knowing as little about baseball as I usually know about the Bible lesson? Wouldn't I find out everything I could about baseball from all the books and pamphlets and leaflets and "rooters" and "fans" I could lay my hands on? And if I kept getting hold of baseball knowledge until it got hold of me would I not get hold of my pupils? Wouldn't I get at the heart of the matter? Wouldn't I get at the hearts of my pupils?

We might as well face this matter squarely. We try to persuade ourselves that our Sunday-school is a success because we have the largest

average attendance or the best offerings, or because we are graded up to date, but unless our teachers are really teaching—unless they are reaching the hearts and minds of their pupils with the saving truths of the lesson—our school is a failure. It makes no difference what kind of a show we may make, it makes no difference what the distinguished visitor thinks of our up-to-date methods and our fine singing, it makes no difference how high we may stand in the statistical reports of our Sunday-school association—if we are not reaching the hearts of our pupils with the Truth that saves, that transforms us into the image of Christ, we are not fulfilling our mission and our school is a failure. And we are not going to put the Truth into the hearts of our pupils until we have set our own hearts on fire with it.[1] If your school is equipped with teachers who burn with desire to know the Word of God and who study that Word until their blood fairly tingles with desire to impart it to their pupils you have a successful Sunday-school though you may have no equipment but a log to sit on. Let us not deceive ourselves. The Sunday-school is not going to be saved by this or that new method, or contrivance, or theory; it is going to be saved by saved and saving teachers!

[1] "How may we set our hearts on fire?" See page 139.

IV

THE VERY FIRST SECRET

THE reason a great many teachers never accomplish anything is because they never aim at anything. If you go into business or politics, you go with the expectation of arriving. You go into it to accomplish something and you know what you want to accomplish. I have seen some people just drop into business and they dropped to the bottom. So with politics. So with everything. No man who just drops into a thing ever attains to anything. You never drop upward. Yet thousands of men and women every year drop into teaching and wonder why they strike bottom. That is what we always strike when we fail to strike for something higher.

Jones took a class because the superintendent asked him. Smith took a class because his wife kept after him. Brown took a class because his conscience would not let him be idle. All three just "dropped" into teaching. And all three dropped to the bottom. Then there was Williams. Williams took it into his head that he wanted to do something for his Master. It weighed on his mind day and night. "What

can I do that will count most for His cause?" he asked himself day after day. Williams was always ambitious. He was never content with less than the best. When he proposed to do something for his Master, he proposed to do the very best thing. What better thing could he do than mold a life—a dozen lives—after the image of his Master? He would do that very thing. He would go to the superintendent and ask for a class. Not that he might have a class, not that he might have something to do, not that he might have a quiet conscience, but that he might have an opportunity to mold a life after the image of his Master. He went. He got the class. He got to work. He kept his eye on the goal. The goal was high. He began to climb. He has been climbing ever since. His teaching has improved every Sunday. Likewise his ability to win and manage his pupils. Likewise his love for his pupils. And the work of molding is going on. Johnny has given his heart to Christ. Charley has gotten rid of his miserable selfish ways. Bob, the eternal bother, is developing into a hero. Williams is "getting there." He is arriving because when he started he started somewhere. If you want to be a successful teacher *aim at something!*

V

WHERE TO BEGIN

MOST beginners try to find out what is the teacher's hardest problem, and then undertake to solve that. That is just what you should not do. You ought not to know what is the teacher's hardest problem. At least, there are a great many things you need to know before you will need to know that. You should want to know what is the least problem to begin with, and I am not sure you will need to go to any one about that, for you will run against it soon enough and when you do you will recognize it. After that you will want to know what is the next to the least, and the next, and the next, and the next; and by and by when you have cut your eye-teeth in the teaching service it may or may not be worth your while to sit down and try to decide what is the greatest of all the problems with which the teacher has to do.

It is one of the mistakes we are always making. We want to try the hard things first. We don't like A B C's; we prefer graduating theses. The first day you took drawing lessons

you thought you would like to try your hand on the Angelus. Happily there was one near by with the wisdom and authority to say: "No, not yet." But unhappily when a teacher enters upon his work there is usually no one to look over his shoulder, and he is left to follow the devices of his own heart. I want to save you from the discouragement which inevitably comes sooner or later to every teacher who is ambitious to master the greatest difficulties at the beginning. You do not want to wrestle with any great problems now. You do not want to devour all the books on pedagogy the first year. I would not trouble myself very much now about an elaborate equipment. I would not allow myself to become interested in the beginning in the science of teaching. Art first, then science. I would not become unduly exercised over the problems which lie at the foundation of teaching. For example, I would not puzzle my mind over what the new psychology is teaching us about adolescence. As for Froebel I would treat him as most people nowadays treat Milton—as one to be admired rather than read. Not that you will never have use for Froebel. There will come a day when you will bind him to your brain and heart as with hooks of steel. But to-day you want to confine yourself to simple matters. You want to dare to remain ignorant fo the great ques-

tions while you try for a little while to master a few of the simplest things in teaching.

And you need to learn these things more at the beginning by the study of your own heart and mind and the study of the hearts and minds of your pupils than by the study of books. Of course you should study books, but a child needs to study the geography of his own neighbourhood with his own eyes before he needs a text-book to study the geography of other neighbourhoods. Begin at the beginning. Question your own heart. First of all I would settle this matter of the teacher's motive—rather, of your own motive. Why did you accept the call to teach a class? Whose call did you accept? Did you enter upon your work deliberately and with intelligent purpose, or did you drop into it? Or were you dragged into it? I do not mean to intimate that if you came into this service with a poor motive, or without any motive at all, you should immediately retire from it. Many a man has started in a good cause with a very poor motive and has found a better one on the way. But I do insist that until you have come into possession of, and have become possessed by, a worthy motive you are not going to accomplish anything worth accomplishing as a teacher, and if your mind is not perfectly clear on this point your very first duty is to make it clear.

Settle this question of motive and settle it now. What am I aiming at? What do I want to accomplish? What sort of a record do I want to make for myself as a teacher? What sort of a record do I want to make for my pupils? What do I want to do for my pupils? A great many teachers have found it very easy to answer this last question to very little purpose. They want to do their pupils "good." Of course. But it is easy to deceive oneself with hazy mottoes, and "doing good" is one of them. A motive, to be of any service, must be clear cut. It must blaze like the sun at the meridian. The teacher above all men has no business with vague generalities. He must be specific. In what specific way do I want to do good? If I am to be a help to a pupil in general I must be a help to him in particular. And just here let me warn you against the notion of helping your pupil simply as a pupil. The fact is "pupil" is a dangerous word. It is almost as dangerous as "class." The teacher who falls into the habit of thinking and speaking of his "class" requires of his heart an impossibility. His heart cannot love a class. No one ever became deeply concerned about a class. We become concerned about individuals, not about classes, congregations or crowds. There is the same danger in the use of the word "soul." A great many pious people are always talking

about saving the souls of men. They have been thinking of the soul as something apart from the man, and while their concern for that impalpable something has increased, their interest in the palpable man has evaporated. And so I would not ask in what way do I want to help the "souls" of my "pupils," but in what way do I want to help John, and Mary, and Henry?

VI

KNOW THYSELF

EVERY teacher teaches two lessons at a time—one from his lesson help and the other from himself. What he teaches from the lesson help often goes wide of the mark; but the teaching that goes out from himself—his personality, his character, his life—goes without aim or effort straight to the hearts of his pupils. The brightest child in the class may fail to grasp the truth that comes from the teacher's lips, but the dullest child in the class will not fail to absorb the truth that comes from the teacher's life.

I know a good-natured, loud-voiced, harum-scarum sort of a girl—not a very young girl either—who has been teaching for I know not how many years. I do not believe that she has ever succeeded in teaching a lesson given her to teach, but she has been the most successful teacher of irreverence and disorder I have ever known. She not only teaches these two subjects to her own class but she teaches them to all the classes in her part of the schoolroom—and without even trying.

I could tell you about a man whose faithful-

ness in sticking to Sunday-school work is a proverb, but whose adhesive qualities, when it comes to sticking to the truth, are not of the best, and who has raised a class of boys that are as proficient in the unholy art of prevarication as any gang of hobos you will find on the street.

And I could tell you about a woman—and you could tell me about one too—who has yet to learn the simplest rules of the art of teaching, but who has never been to her class without teaching successfully some lesson in the art of being kind or gentle or charitable—and all without knowing that she was teaching anything at all.

It is not what the teacher teaches purposely or by earnest effort that goes deepest into the hearts of his pupils, but what he teaches unconsciously and without any purpose at all. It is not what the teacher says so much as what he is that makes for success in his holy calling.

If this is true then it ought to go without saying that the best part of a teacher's preparation for his class is the preparation of himself. He may spend a whole week in an intelligent study of the lesson, and in a sympathetic study of his pupils, and in deciding upon the application of the truths of the lesson to the needs of his pupils, but if he does not go further it would perhaps be just as well if he did not go to his

class at all. The teacher sits before his class as its supreme object lesson. He is always before his pupils. They are always within his reach. He is always teaching them whether he intends to teach them or not. He is always teaching whether his pupils intend that they shall be taught or not. No one but a corpse can sit in the presence of children without teaching them some lesson, and even a corpse will teach them one lesson.

I do not mean to say that the pupils are going to pattern after the teacher in all things. I do not mean to say that if he is always gentle they will be always gentle, or if he is peevish and impatient he is going to teach them to be peevish and impatient. But he is going to teach them, all the same. The little child who thinks that whatever teacher does is right is going to be taught gentle ways by the teacher's gentleness. The big boy who has reached the point where he does not find it easy to trust anybody is not going to be taught impatience by the teacher's impatience, but when the teacher exhibits impatience he is going to say to himself that if that is religion he does not want any of it. Every time a teacher exhibits an unchristian temper in the presence of little children they are taught that it is all right because teacher does it: and every time a teacher exhibits an unchristian temper in the presence of older

pupils he drives them further and further away from the Christian life.

And so while it is an exceedingly important thing to know your lesson and to have it well in hand, it is a far more important thing for you to know yourself and to have yourself well in hand. You may sometimes be compelled to go to your class without having mastered your lesson, but you are never under obligation to go to your class without having first mastered yourself. Spend the last moments before going to Sunday-school in getting this mastery. Find your way into the presence of the Master. Have Him cleanse your heart anew and fill you with His Spirit. Remain in His presence until your heart is in a glow and your face reflects the light that shines from His face; until all the harsher things in your nature disappear and love reigns supreme; until you are full of sweetness and gentleness and loving kindness. Recall your ideal. Think a little while on high planes. Climb by prayer up to the heights where petty things cease to vex; where it is easy to be patient; where trying circumstances are no longer trying; where one can suffer with a smile; where one can love the unlovely and the unlovable.

And always try to go to Sunday-school by way of this mountain top.

VII

HOW TO KEEP WIDE AWAKE

MENTAL stagnation is the secret of half of our woes. I would not say that there is a lack of mentality in our Sunday-schools, but there is often a distressing repugnance to mental exercise. So many of our teachers get up on Sunday morning with the feeling that it is only children's work today and there is no need to shake one's self to get very wide awake. And they don't shake themselves. They come to Sunday-school aroused just enough to know where they are and to go through the motion—with a yawn. Watch one of these drowsy souls going through the motion. He takes up his lesson magazine—teachers of his sort always carry lesson helps to Sunday-school—and turns the leaves wearily to find the lesson. He did that the night before when he was so sleepy he could hardly find the place. He read the lesson over—walked through it as it were—and left it where it was and went to bed. Not an idea had entered his head. And on this bright Sunday morning he has come to Sunday-school as innocent of ideas as a post. And he is so sleepy!

He has a drowsy hope that now the lesson must be taught something will come to him to teach. He likes to think that man's extremity is God's opportunity. And he lifts up his sleepy heart to God and tells Him that now is His time. And then he proceeds, still wearily, to ask such questions as he can find in the magazine. There is a fear that he will yet have to stick pins in himself to keep awake. And presently before he is aware the bell rings. It does not startle him. He is not sorry to be interrupted. What he has been doing is of no consequence anyway. And so he takes it as a matter of course and closes his magazine—with another yawn.

Isn't this an extreme case? Certainly; but between this teacher of the chronic yawn and the wide-awake teacher who is bringing things to pass there is a vast stretch of men and women in every conceivable stage of mental stagnation. And these are the people who are making our Sunday-school problems for us. What you want to do, dear teacher, is to take one good look at this drowsy army and then forever hereafter cherish as your greatest horror the thought of ever going over to it.

Save yourself from stagnation and you will save your pupils from starvation.

How may one overcome mental stagnation? Just as one overcomes any other sort of stag-

nation. If it is a pond of stagnant water we provide an outlet and start a stream of pure fresh water through at the other end. And if we want to save it permanently from stagnation we keep the outlet open and we keep the pure fresh stream running through it forever. It is a matter of eternal movement. We must keep pouring out and we must keep pouring in. Pouring out is not enough. If you continually give out from your mind and take nothing into it you will soon become a mental bankrupt. Pouring in is not enough. If you continually receive into your mind and give nothing forth you will become as helpless as a stuffed goose. If you want to keep mentally alert you must see to it that something is continually going out of your mind and that something is continually coming into it. You must be continually acquiring knowledge and ideas and inspiring truths, and you must be continually sharing with others the knowledge and ideas and inspiring truths which come to you. As a teacher you have abundant opportunity to make use of all that you may acquire. The most important thing to you is to acquire all that you can make use of. If you are going to be a good teacher you must be a good reader. You must sharpen your mind by contact with other minds. You must fill up your mind with ideas of other minds. You must be a good

learner. One of our most serious problems is just here. We cannot get our teachers to read. A live lawyer reads up on his cases, and a live doctor reads up on his cases. If the lawyer and doctor cease to read up on their cases it is only a question of time when they will cease to have any cases to read up on. The teacher needs to read up on his cases just as truly as the lawyer or the doctor. He needs to read up on the lesson for the next Sunday. He needs to read up on the art of teaching. He needs to read up on the art of management. He needs to read all the good books on child study. He needs to read his pupils. And occasionally he needs to read himself to find out for himself who he is and what are his motives and what he is about. Your drowsy teacher manages to pull through a single lesson help Saturday night and if you suggest trying an additional help he tells you that he has more than he can manage already. But when a teacher with a live brain has gone through one lesson help he has just gotten his appetite whetted. He wants more. And he reads all the lesson helps he can buy, beg or borrow.

The teacher should make the same sort of mental preparation for his class that the public speaker makes. No public speaker that has a reputation to sustain would dare to go before an audience with his mind asleep. He first

wakes himself up. He goes over the address that he is to deliver and gets the outline clearly in his mind. He thinks over the matter until he becomes aroused. If he has difficulty in arousing himself over what he is going to say he takes up a stirring book and reads a chapter in that. He does anything, everything that can possibly wake him up and set his heart on fire. If your work is to be worth while you must find time before you go to Sunday-school to wake up your mind. You must get up early enough to wake it up. And you must not go until you are awake even if you must get there late.

VIII

HOW TO STIR UP YOUR ENTHUSIASM

A LITTLE girl went to church for the first time and came away deeply impressed by the often repeated petition, "Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." And all through the week the little thing was going around the house with her little hands folded and uttering in a low tone, "Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners; Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners." One day her father overheard her in the hall and said to her, "Yes, my darling, we are all miserable sinners." She looked up into his face in surprise and exclaimed, "Oh, no, papa, we ain't!" "Yes," he said, "we are all miserable sinners." "But, papa, not sho nuff; not weally." And this dear little thing, even at her tender age, had already learned that a great many things that we may say in this world are merely make-believes. We don't mean them "sho nuff; weally."

I think sometimes that this is our chief trouble in our Sunday-school work. We insist that the Sunday-school is the biggest thing in the world, that the work of molding a little life in the image of Christ is the greatest work

in the world; but when we go to our work we say by our actions, which speak louder than words, that we don't mean it "sho nuff; weally." And because we don't mean it "sho nuff" we have no enthusiasm for our work.

Now enthusiasm is something we have got to have or our work will not be worth while. How can we stir up our enthusiasm? One way is to think about our work—not about the discouraging things that relate to our own efforts, but about the stirring things that relate to our work as a whole. For example, let me give you two rousing facts that will warm your heart every time you revert to them. One of these is the fact that it was Jesus who first exalted the child to his true place in the world. Has it ever occurred to you that you may search pagan literature in vain for a word that may be interpreted as a worthy estimate of childhood? Paganism never dreamed of giving the child the first place in the kingdom of heaven: it does not even give him a footstool in the kingdom of heaven. The heathen world valued a child not for what he was but for what he would become. The child was only the promise of which man was the fulfillment. It was Jesus who first taught that the child is worthy of our thoughts for what he is in himself without regard to what he may become. He did not look upon the dead child as a bud of promise

blighted. "The maid is not dead but sleepeth." And He did not value the child as father to the man. He valued him for the spirit that was in him—the spirit which peculiarly fitted him to become a subject in the kingdom of heaven; the spirit which gives one the right to a high place in the kingdom of heaven. This idea the world never had, and even after Jesus came the world was so slow to receive it that it was not until the days of Froebel that men began to realize its full meaning, for it was Froebel who first showed the folly of educating a child as a man in embryo.

In the literature of the Jews you will find an apparent exception. As Trumbull has pointed out the writings of the rabbis teem with sentiments which would flow naturally from the pen of the most progressive Christian teacher of our own day. The education of the child is boldly declared to be the greatest duty of man. The school is the greatest institution in the world. The calling of the teacher is the greatest calling in the world. "He who teaches the child of his fellow man," says a Talmudic proverb, "shall occupy a prominent place among the saints above." "The true guardians of the city are the teachers." "The child must not be detained from the schools even though it might help build the temple." "He who refuses a pupil one lesson has, as it

were, robbed him of his parental inheritance." But while these sayings indicate that the Jews laid great stress upon the training of the young, the exception, as Trumbull insists, is only seeming, for there is no evidence that the Jews had any such conception of the exaltation of the child as that which Jesus taught. They did not value the child for what he was but only for what he was to become.

The other fact about which you need to refresh your memory now and then is that since the days of Jesus pure and undefiled religion has prospered just in proportion as the Church has emulated the example of our Lord and set the child in the midst. Whenever the Church has been dominated by the thought that while the most serious business in life is living the next most serious business is teaching children how to live, religion has prospered regardless of all adverse conditions. On the other hand, when the interest of the Church in children and in childhood has declined religion has declined regardless of all favouring conditions. From the very beginning the men to whom was committed the spreading of the Gospel took to heart the injunctions of our blessed Lord to feed the lambs of the flock. The apostles were teachers as well as preachers. Note how often it is said that they taught as well as preached the Word of God. As Christianity spread

children were gathered together in every community for catechetical instruction in the elements of faith, while in the great circles of population larger schools were established for more advanced instruction. After the days of the apostles Christianity was spread largely by means of the work done in the Bible schools. "It is a remarkable fact," says Dr. Schaff, "that after the days of the apostles no names of great missionaries are mentioned till the opening of the Middle Ages. There were no missionary societies, no missionary institutions, no organized efforts in the Ante-Nicene age, and yet in less than three hundred years from the death of St. John the whole population of the Roman Empire, which then represented the civilized world, was nominally Christianized." In the fourth century when Julian the Apostate raised his hand against the Church he saw that the very life of Christianity pivoted upon the religious training of the young, and his fiercest blow was aimed at the Christian teachers in the schools of the empire. One trembles to think what would have happened if Julian had lived long enough to close the Christian schools and rid all other schools of the empire of Christian teachers.

"Thus," says Trumbull,[1] "it is clear that the

[1] "Yale Lectures on the Sunday-school" (Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y.).

early Christian Church was not unfaithful to its trust or unmindful of the duty imposed upon it by the Great Commission. It organized Bible schools far and near as a means of instructing its converts and of training its membership. And so it continued to do so long as it wisely followed the injunctions of its Divine Founder. But as it grew in worldly prominence and lost in spiritual life changes came in the methods of its training work. Its ritual services were expanded and its teaching exercises were diminished." Profit says that "when the ecclesiastical spirit overcame the evangelical the Church grew worldly in her instructions, making more of a splendid ritual than of a pure faith, and magnifying church orthodoxy above vital piety, catechetical instruction, of course, declined." And Lea, in his history of the Inquisition, shows conclusively that the decline of the spiritual life of the Church was attributed to the neglect of the Church of its educational function.

In the light of these facts what a responsibility rests upon the Sunday-school teacher!

IX

A SETTLED MIND

THERE are few greater obstacles in the way of a teacher's success than an unsettled mind. I do not mean an open mind—a true student always keeps his mind open,—but a mind that is always in a state of uncertainty and unrest. If you never know what to believe,—if your mind is like a reed that bends before every wind,—if you cannot hear an argument against your faith without trembling at the knees,—if you feel yourself growing dizzy whenever you hear that another famous professor has just abolished life after death,—you may be able to do some things worth while, but you are in no condition to teach a class. I do not hesitate to say that a teacher should go to his class feeling the ground beneath his feet or he should not go at all. We must get rid of the things which disturb our peace. This cannot be done by trying to avoid them but by bravely facing them. Take for illustration the presumptions of a certain class of scientists that have unsettled the minds of so many teachers. One can never get rid of the nervousness caused by the vapourings

of these men by simply shutting one's eyes. The only way is to face the matter squarely and think it through once for all. If you will do this you are not likely to receive any serious shocks from this source again and you will probably be able to keep your eyes open to all the future discoveries of Science without discomfort.

I have found that when a teacher succeeds in getting the right attitude towards Science he is not easily unsettled by disturbers of any sort, and for this reason I am going to call attention to two or three things which many teachers have found worth remembering in dealing with this subject.

Let me say at the outset that I have nothing against Science—no more than I have against the sun. The sun deserves my admiration and respect, and it receives both. But I am not a sun-worshiper, and I do not regard it with unreasonable awe. Nor have I great respect for any of its imitations. I do not admire painted suns or suns cut out of yellow paper. So Science deserves my respect and admiration, and it receives both. But not being a worshiper of Science, I do not fall down before it, nor do I stand in awe of the monstrous image which certain so-called scientists have set up in the world and labelled *Science*, and commanded all men, under pain of scorn, to fall on their

faces before it. There is Science and science, and there are scientists and scientists.

Your true scientist is the humblest of men. He walks softly all his days. He feels like Isaac Newton felt—that he is only a little child picking up a few pebbles here and there on the seashore of knowledge. He realizes that he knows little, and therefore he speaks little. He makes no loud claims for himself or for Science. He vaunteth not himself. He is not puffed up. He doth not behave himself unseemly. He does not speak with the assurance of those who know that they are the people, and that wisdom will die with them. He excels in modesty. He remembers that much of what men thought was true yesterday is no longer true to-day. And he is not certain but that much which seems true to-day will evaporate to-morrow. He believes in Science, but he does not believe in the infallibility of scientists. He expects great things of Science, but he recognizes its limitations. He does not believe that it is the fountain of all truth. He does not expect Science to shed light on God. He rather looks to God to shed light on Science. Nor can he see the point in the argument that because Science has not discovered God there is no God. He remembers that Science has not yet discovered his mother's love or any of the noble sentiments that abide in his own great heart.

Let this man tell you what Science is, and you will see in it nothing to doubt or scorn; as an intelligent being you must accept it, and as a true man you must respect it.

But unfortunately the world does not get its knowledge of Science from your humble seeker after truth. During the last fifty years the field of Science has been invaded by a vast army of young men in search not of truth, but of fame. And men whose foremost ambition is fame are never humble. And they are never quiet. And so it has come to pass that this motley crowd of noisy fame-seekers has almost drowned the quiet voices of true scientists, and nearly all that many of us have heard about Science in recent years has come from fakirs or amateurs. And what a scene we have been having all through this half century of pseudo-scientific exploitation! Bent on fame, old Nebuchadnezzar erected a great image of gold and commanded all men at the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer to fall on their faces and worship before it. Bent on fame, our modern self-appointed priests of Science have set up a monstrous image of their god and have commanded all men everywhere to fall down and worship before it. And the trick has worked marvellously. This image is no more like Science than an elephant is like a cow, but let the

cornet sound and all the world falls on its face before it. Great is Nebuchadnezzar! Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Great is Science! People sit down and talk about the great and terrible image in awed whispers. If a little man fresh from Germany takes snuff in the name of Science, the whole world sneezes. If anybody anywhere, with or without testimonials, with or without insignia of authority, boldly expresses an opinion in the name of Science, the whole world bows before him in silent submission, and the thing is settled. Science says so, and Science is infallible, notwithstanding the fact that our scientific books must be written over once every five or ten years to set Science right before the world. The other day a whole city was stirred from centre to circumference because a certain doctor of Science decided on a public platform that there was no evidence of immortality or of God. Nobody had ever taken the learned doctor seriously on any practical question of life. Nobody would accept his opinion about a beefsteak or a flower garden or a new coat. In all things he was a mere joke, but when he rendered his decision in the name of Science, people fell on their faces and wept, and would not be comforted.

Every age has its bugaboo. We have had our hobgoblins, our ogres, our witches, our ghosts,

our myriad superstitions. To-day we have this monster image which so-called scientists have set up to overawe the "common herd." We use the name of Science to conjure with and to cast spells. If people will not do their thinking to suit us, we condemn them to perdition in the name of Science—though we insert by way of parenthesis that Science does not believe in perdition. If we do not like to see a man going around with simple faith, serving God and his fellow men, and putting our poor lives to shame, we proceed to frighten him out of his faith and out of his wits by calling over him the name of Science. We tell him that Science knows nothing of God, and nothing of religion, and that what Science doesn't know doesn't exist. We can hardly sleep of nights for thinking of Science. I wonder we have any nerves.

No, I have nothing against Science. Science has never said that there is no God. Science has never uttered a word against our holy religion. Science has never thrown any doubt upon revealed truth. It has never denied the existence of the spiritual world. The fact that some scientists have denied everything that is precious to God's people proves nothing, except that men will sometimes talk of things they know nothing about. Science is the friend of humanity, and we are overwhelmingly in its

debt. But while I have nothing against Science, I have somewhat against certain scientists whose heads have been turned by their achievements, and who boast great things. And I have more against this vast army of swollen fame-seekers who have no achievements to boast of, and who, realizing that they cannot get a hearing on their own account, have set up this monster image and appointed themselves its priests, in order to secure the ear and respect and worship of mankind. I am sick and tired of the absurd pretensions of mere novices who presume to parade in the garb of Science, but who are unworthy to hold a light for a true scientist to work by.

It is such a simple trick. Mrs. Innocence Sublime, who is newly married, and has just found her way to the kitchen for the first time in her life, is informed with authority by her cook that all good cooks do thus and so. The cook does not know what good cooks do, but she knows perfectly well that Mrs. Innocence Sublime does not know either; and so she can utter herself with safety. The Rev. Jonathan Theologue, just from the factory, informs his verdant congregation that all modern scholarship worthy of the name is in hearty accord with his opinions. The Rev. Jonathan Theologue doesn't know what all modern scholarship is in accord with, but he is perfectly

certain that his congregation doesn't know either, and, being sadly in need of something to back up his statements, he chooses "modern scholarship" as an awe-compelling sound. So in the field of Science there are bright young seekers after fame, who have hardly learned enough to be accounted apprentices, but who know that they cannot get a hearing on their own account, and, having an itching for world-worship, they clothe themselves in the robes of Science, and deepening their voices, go forth to speak in the name of the monster image. Nobody but Mrs. Innocence Sublime takes the cook seriously. Nobody but the most verdant of congregations takes the Rev. Jonathan Theologue seriously. Why should we take Professor Pseudo-Scientist seriously?

X

HOW TO STUDY THE LESSON

WHERE one is taught two must learn —the teacher as well as the pupil. A mere hearer of lessons does not need to know anything. One can impart only that which he has learned himself, and if you are going to impart anything to your pupils you must study as faithfully as you want your pupils to study.

What is the one thing needful in the study of the lesson? On the divine side, the Holy Spirit; on the human side, a willing spirit. The simple condition upon which the Book opens its treasures is a willingness to do what we may find commanded therein. As a rule the Book shuts up like an oyster when it is approached by a cold heart, a critic, a curiosity hunter or a croaker.

The best time to begin the preparation of next Sunday's lesson is the first moment you can find after teaching this Sunday's lesson. The reason is that which prompts the fireman to keep his fire going through the night rather than start with a cold boiler when the morning comes. It is an easy matter to get up steam

when the water is already hot in the boiler. It is easier—far easier—to get interested in next Sunday's lesson while the heart is yet warm over the lesson you have just taught than it is to take it up after the mind and heart have had time to grow cold again. So you want to use the very first opportunity to make your start on the next lesson. You need not go very far, but you want to make a start. You want at least to go far enough to save the trouble of working your heart and mind up from a dead level later on in the week.

First, find the next lesson and mark it.[1] Then turn back to the last lesson, read it over, recall its principal points and read on up to the beginning of the next lesson. Then read the next lesson rapidly simply to catch the general drift. If now you can read it in the original, that is well, though the benefit to be derived from reading it in the original is usually much exaggerated. The next best thing—and to the great majority of people a much better thing—is to read all the different versions you can lay your hands on. There are many of these and they are all helpful, if for no other reason than that they keep you on the alert to note the changes from the authorized version. They keep you wide awake and that is the first es-

[1] This method is offered only for its suggestive value as the intelligent student will want to mark out his own path.

sential in Bible study. It is a delightful sensation when one comes across such renderings as this which I happened upon just now in an old Scotch translation: "Abandon us not to temptation, but preserve us from evil"; or this: "Which of you can by his anxiety prolong his life one hour?" or this: "Having looked up he said, 'I see men whom I distinguish from trees only by their walking.'"

After reading the text in all the versions you have at hand, take up the lesson helps and notice the subject given to the lesson and read the Golden Text. I know most authorities will tell you to use helps very sparingly, and not to use them at all until you have gotten everything out of the lesson that you can get for yourself; but I also happen to know that most authorities use all the helps they can get hold of, and that they are not always careful to wait until they have exhausted the subject for themselves. You do not want to let other people do any more thinking for you than you can help, but you will probably need to use a good deal of their thinking nevertheless.

Now return to the text, and read it over very slowly with pencil in hand, and underscore every word or phrase that is in the least degree obscure. When you have done this, go back to the beginning and take up these obscure words and phrases one at a time and see what you

can do with them. Sometimes nothing more is needed than a steady gaze at the obscure word until the mind is concentrated wholly upon it; frequently, however, you will need to go to your lesson helps. If you have library helps, such as a good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia, you will often want to go to them for further light.

When you have cleared up the obscure points you will be ready to test your knowledge of the text. It is of the highest importance that you should do this at this point, for you are not prepared to go further until you are absolutely sure of your ground. There is one sure way of testing your knowledge of the text and fixing its meaning indelibly in your mind, and that is by writing it out in your own language. Close your Bible, and with pencil and paper in hand write down in your own words the substance of the text just as fully as possible. If you have never done this you will be surprised to see how quickly it will enable you to master the text.

Now that you have the facts of the lesson clearly before you, the next step is to analyze the story and learn its teachings. Ask yourself such questions as, What is all this about? Who is it of whom the lesson is speaking? What do we know about his life? What of his character? What particular incidents concerning

him are here recorded? What prompted him to do as he did? Continue questioning yourself until you have brought out in an orderly way all the facts of the lesson. Now ask, What does all this teach? What is it to me? How can I apply it to my own heart and my life? What good can I get out of it? What suggestions do I find that may be helpful in my own daily walk? What is the one thing of the lesson that is preëminent? What is the very kernel of the lesson—the very heart of the lesson? Do not ask, How am I to teach this? or, What can I get out of this for my pupils? The time for this is not yet. You are now studying the lesson not as a teacher, but as a pupil. Thus far you should have forgotten that you are a teacher. You should study the lesson for your own soul's sake. When you have done this you will be ready to study the lesson for the sake of your pupils.

Here are three points worth remembering:

1. My old teacher of mathematics used to say to us at the beginning of a written examination, "Young gentlemen, work out all the problems you can, first, and then work out the problems you can't." It is a good rule to observe in studying one's lesson. Don't dwell too long on an obscure passage; mark it and when you have studied its easier surroundings you

may come back to it better prepared to get at the kernel of the matter.

2. You are not prepared to teach the lesson until you are able to reproduce the lesson text in your own language. Test your preparation: can you rewrite the text in the terms of every-day life?

3. When a thought in the lesson is confused or obscure sit down and try to write it out. It is wonderful how the act of writing clears up obscurity and brings order out of chaos.

XI

HOW TO PLAN THE LESSON

WHEN the teacher has studied the lesson for his own profit—when he has eaten of its bread and drunk of its water, and put forth his hand and taken of its honey; when his own eyes have been enlightened—he is ready to prepare the lesson for his class, and not until then.

This special preparation is a serious task and it calls for an uninterrupted hour, an hour that should be as full of hallowing quiet as a Sabbath eventide. I am fond of saying that Saturday night, that border-land between the week of cares and the Sabbath of calm which our fathers set apart as the outer court of the sanctuary, but which we in our greed have plowed over and sown down in left-overs, is the teacher's golden opportunity. Certainly no other hour can be so easily fitted up and kept sacred for this special task. Let us suppose that this quiet hour has come and that you have found a quiet place where you can spend it without interruption. You have opened your Bible at the lesson which has now come to be a living, burning truth. Look at this lesson for a

moment and then look away and try to realize the presence of your pupils. Look at your pupils. It is hardly worth while to attempt any preparation at all if you do not vividly realize your class on the one hand and your lesson on the other. Put them side by side and look at them. Look at the lesson. What are its practical teachings? What is its great central truth—the truth you want to burn into the hearts of your pupils? Write it down on paper and look at it. What are some of its practical teachings? Write them down and look at them. Now look at your class. That is to say, look at Charles and Sarah and Henry and Alice—not your class in the abstract but each pupil in the concrete. I have frequently said that the teacher who habitually thinks of his class as a whole rather than its individual members is as badly out of place as the parent who never prays for his children except in a lump. Look at these pupils with the practical teachings of the lesson in mind. What are the special needs of each pupil? Don't be in a hurry; take time to think this matter through to some purpose. When you have done this recall again the practical teachings of the lesson, and with the needs of your pupils in view try to decide what truths shall be pressed home in the class. Then decide what truth shall be placed foremost, emphasizing it above

all others. The others may be placed in the background, only one should be placed in the foreground. When the lesson is ended there should be burning in the hearts of the children one great truth—burning as clearly and as sharply defined as the flame of a lamp.

The next thing is to take up the lesson story and settle upon your plan of unfolding it. There are half a dozen points which you will need to decide with care.

First, you want to ask what you shall say to secure attention. Not what you shall say to force attention but what you shall say to win attention. Perhaps an incident will come into your mind which you are confident will get the attention of your pupils. But are you sure that the telling of this incident will help you to get your hand on the pupils' minds? Will it draw your pupils around you ready to follow wherever you may lead, or will it only start their minds off on an excursion through endless fields of fancy where there are daisies and butterflies enough to last through the lesson hour? Children are very much like ponies; it is one thing to catch the ear of a capering pony and cause him to stop suddenly and gaze at you, but it is quite another thing to induce him to stand and allow you to go to him and place a bit in his mouth.

Second, you want to decide how to make the

connecting link between this lesson and the last. Omitting the connecting link is the besetting sin of the average teacher. Children do not remember disconnected lessons any better than the rest of us. A chain always helps the memory.

Third, what questions shall be asked on the lesson itself? Write them down. Don't forget that the act of writing not only clarifies the mind, but it photographs the question in your mind so that it will come up readily at the moment you want it. Questions in the lesson helps are not designed to save you the trouble of making questions of your own, but rather to help you in making such questions.

Fourth, decide what points should be illustrated and select your illustrations. Do not select an illustration from any printed thing until you have searched your memory through and through for an illustration that has come into your own every-day life. Home-made illustrations are best, be they ever so homely. In teaching young children use incidents, not figures of speech. Figurative language which shines for mature minds only casts a shadow for little children to stumble in.

Fifth, are there any simple objects which may be used to illustrate the lesson? Take care that you select objects that will illustrate, and that will not divert. A pair of scissors will illustrate,

but a mellow red apple, full of teaching as it may be to mature minds, will only make a child's mouth water.

Sixth, decide how the lesson shall be brought to a close. There are teachers who carefully plan the first part of the lesson and leave the latter part to providence, or to the inspiration of the moment, which they usually assume to be the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. A good end may make amends for a bad beginning, but a good beginning never counterbalances a bad end.

The lesson plan is now ready. But are you ready? No: not until you have brought yourself face to face with your own soul. Not until you have examined your commission and gazed long upon the model after which you are trying to mold the lump of clay heaven has put into your hands. Not until you have presented your pupils, one by one, at the throne of grace, and poured out your own soul unto God.

XII

THE TEACHER'S PERSONAL PREPARATION

PREPARING to teach a lesson is like winding up a toy : the moment you let it go the thing begins to run down. Preparing is one problem ; staying prepared is another. I have been ready to teach a lesson at ten o'clock on Saturday night, and I have found myself utterly unprepared to teach it at ten o'clock the next morning. This leads me to speak of some little things which are usually overlooked because they are small, but which usually prove to be the little foxes that spoil the vines.

Many a good lesson is spoiled by a bad digestion. To illustrate, here is my friend Jones. Jones is as bright a fellow as one will meet between Sundays. He knows how to study his lesson, and he studies it. And he knows how to plan it for his class. When Sunday comes everything is ready. All the facts are at hand. The teaching points are drawn up in battle array. The illustrations are coming up in the rear. Everything is in shape. Everything except Jones himself. Jones has

a weakness for good suppers. He has a special weakness for good suppers that are late. And on Saturday nights, when the work of the week is over and everything is ready for Sunday, he likes to indulge a bit. Last night he ate too much, and this morning he woke up with that dark brown taste. You know the taste. And you know how brown it gets to be. When a man starts down-town to his office on Monday with that taste he knows what it means. His brain is dull, his heart is cold, his knees are shaky, and he carries a cotton string where his backbone used to be. He can't think, he can't plan, he can't give orders, he can't face his creditors, he can't make good in anything. The day is an utter loss—unless he can get something to overcome that dark brown taste. And a wise business man is not going down-town with that taste in his mouth if he can help it. But Jones, who knows all this as well as you or I, somehow imagines that when it comes to "religious" work it is different. He has prepared his lesson faithfully, and he is going to Sunday-school to attend to the Lord's business, and he does not see why he cannot look to the Lord to help him through without regard to such trifling hindrances as a late supper may have put in his way. But the Lord does not undertake to master the man who is willingly mastered by his own stomach, and poor Jones

goes down in ignoble defeat. When a teacher's stomach is against him, everything is against him. His facts will not muster. His teaching truths refuse to come forward at his command. His illustrations loiter indifferently in the rear. And his scholars—if you had followed the boys after the lesson was over you would have heard Jim saying to Bob: "I don't see what they can expect of a fellow with that old stupid ox for a teacher."

But poor Jones is not alone. At the very moment that he was struggling to make the lesson move, if you had looked over towards the northeast corner you would have seen Miss Sapphira Smith stretching her beautiful little mouth into a most unbeautiful yawning chasm. And if you had looked towards the south you would have seen three other teachers of assorted sizes and sexes likewise engaged in the manufacture of yawns. And just back of them one teacher was looking at his watch, and another —a great big benevolent-looking hulk—had his chair tilted back, and his eyes closed, and was drumming with his fingers on his song-book.

Dullness is produced by emptiness. It is the only thing that emptiness produces. Emptiness of the head is caused either by putting nothing in the head or by putting too much in the stomach. Some of us suffer from one cause, some from the other. Some, alas! from both.

What we need is all-round preparation for the class. One teacher prepares his head and neglects his heart. Another prepares his heart and neglects his head. The wise teacher prepares both heart and head and does not neglect his stomach.

When you lay down the lesson Saturday night remember that He who giveth His beloved sleep is also ready to keep your mind in perfect peace when you are awake. Look to Him for a composed mind when you awake on the morrow. I take it for granted, of course, that you will not make such a prayer if you have already done those things during the day which in the natural course of events will blossom into a dull headache and depressed spirits to-morrow.

When you wake in the morning direct your first thoughts straight to the throne of God. Don't aim an inch lower. Whatever you do through the day be sure that you steel your mind at the beginning against those things which fret and distract. Don't have any unsettled problems about dress to solve. Attend to such matters on Saturday. That is what the latter half of Saturday is for. You may not think it a serious matter but if you allow anything to distract you at the beginning of the day you are not going to be ready to teach that lesson when the time comes. Take hold

of yourself and refuse to allow yourself to hurry. Keep yourself composed the first hour of the day and you will be thrice armed against the distractions of the remainder of the day.

Get into communication with God with your first waking thoughts and then while you are preparing your toilet get *en rapport* with the day. Take a peep through the blinds, and if the sun shines open your heart to its gladness. If it does not shine that is the moment to steel your heart against the depression of a gloomy day. Don't let the weather master you; master the weather. Watch against everything of a disturbing character. Watch against the surprises that bring the nerves to the surface. Resolve to see and hear the things which make for peace. At the breakfast table look into the sunny faces and look beyond the morose one. If there is a single bit of toast that isn't burnt don't know that there is anything the matter with the rest. Be an optimist—at least on Sunday morning at the breakfast table. Keep sweet. Keep happy. Remember you have prepared your lesson and you have a great opportunity before you, and it would be a pity to allow anything to spoil it. At the same time don't allow yourself to be weighed down with a sense of the responsibility before you. Don't think of your teaching as a responsibility but as an opportunity. When you put on your hat and

start to Sunday-school, start as one going forth to seize an opportunity, not as one going to take up a burden. But don't be impatient to seize it. Don't allow yourself to hurry. Many a teacher is nervous and useless throughout the Sunday-school hour simply because the nerves all came to the surface while on a run to get to Sunday-school on time. Promptness is a cardinal virtue in a teacher, but nervousness is a cardinal sin. Better be late than be nervous. Better not come at all than be nervous.

Now you have your nerves *en rapport* with the day and with your opportunity. The next thing is to get *en rapport* with your class—rather, with each member of your class. Remember, the first impressions are the lasting ones. Johnny was all out of sorts last Sunday because when you came in you glanced at him and spoke in an absent-minded sort of way. You cannot afford to speak to any of your pupils in an absent-minded sort of way. The moment a pupil sees you are not thinking of him that moment he ceases to care for you. He expects the teacher to think of him whatever else and whoever else he may have to think of. He expects the teacher to see him if it requires a dozen eyes to see him. He expects a warm, friendly hand-shake with all five fingers, and not two icy tips, though it may take a dozen hands to do it. But right here take care. If a

boy is four or five years old or under you may pet him as you will, but if he is beyond five try to think of him, not as a baby, but as a little man. Treat him respectfully. Don't "O dear" him. Don't put the emphasis on "little." If he is more than eight years of age don't pat him on the head—for your life, don't. If he is more than ten years of age don't put your arm around him. You may put your hand on his shoulder provided you don't do it patronizingly. Remember, he feels himself a man—every inch a man—and it is not your business to undeceive him. If you have a class of girls it will not make a great deal of difference. Girls will take a great deal of petting—most of them. Even the biggest girls do not mind sometimes being called little. But it is a matter of the most vital importance that you do not rub a boy the wrong way by petting him when he has reached the age when he no longer regards himself as a little boy.

Now that you have settled yourself among your pupils and have made yourself in a measure one of them—though I do not say that a teacher should make himself a child in the class because he is with children—you want to turn your heart upward for a moment and get a new hold on the Throne. Are you ready? Last night you decided upon a little incident that you would tell to win the interest of the pupils and

open the way to the lesson. Run over it a moment in your mind to be sure you recall it distinctly. When you have it clearly before you tell it. It is important not to stumble at the beginning. And it is important that while these first words are being spoken you should look straight into the eyes of each pupil. If you want to talk over a 'phone you first get the connection. This is what you must try to do in these opening words—connect your mind and soul with the mind and soul of each pupil.

XIII

GETTING THE POINT OF CONTACT

THE difference between a trained teacher and a novice is never more apparent than in the first five minutes of the lesson hour. The novice looks first at the lesson. The trained teacher looks first at the pupils. The novice thinks of the lesson as a little pile of chunks—chunks of knowledge—which he is commissioned to throw into the minds of his pupils. And he proceeds to throw them. Whether the minds of his pupils are open to his chunks or not does not give him any concern. He feels that it is his business to throw them and he trusts to the Lord for the rest. The trained teacher knows that his lesson is not a pile of chunks but a single link in the chain of knowledge; and he first looks into the minds of his pupils to see if he can find another link to which it can be attached. He knows that a pupil cannot be taught by throwing knowledge into his mind in chunks. Knowledge grows as a chain grows—a link at a time; and the last link must be linked with the preceding link. And so, as I have said, the trained teacher first looks into the minds of his pupils

to find something to which he can attach the link of knowledge which the lesson contains. To do this he must bring his mind to a level with the minds of his pupils. It is what Du Bois calls getting the point of contact.[1] You cannot stand off at a distance and throw knowledge at a pupil. You must come close to him and take hold of a link that is in his mind and proceed to link into it the new link of knowledge which you wish him to possess.

Should the teacher begin by talking about what is uppermost in the minds of the pupils? No; not always. I am aware that some of our authorities tell us that if the boys are thinking about baseball the teacher should talk ball, and if the girls are thinking about new hats he should talk hats. But it is one thing to interest your pupils and it is another thing to hold them after they are interested. The theory is that one should talk ball and hats until the pupils are interested and then deftly lead them from ball or hats to the lesson. But can you deftly lead them? That is the question. Having persuaded your balking pony to start off in a run will you be able to hold him in the road and make him go where you want him to go? It is easy enough to start a boy's mind off on the subject of ball, but are you strong enough

[1] "The Point of Contact in Teaching," by Patterson Du Bois.

to turn his mind from ball to something else? Is the average teacher who starts his pupils' minds off on the subject of hats just before Easter able to turn their minds away from hats long enough to get the lesson into their heads? I am afraid not. A skillful teacher may use almost anything to awaken interest but the unskillful must be careful. When you want your boy to go up-town on an errand do you start him by sending him to the pantry where the goodies are?

But while it is not always safe to begin with what is in the pupil's mind it is necessary to begin with something that he already knows, something in which he is interested. If you have a well trained class, getting your point of contact will not be a difficult matter. As a rule you will have nothing to do but to have your pupils recall the most interesting facts about the last lesson. When you have done this it will be an easy matter for you to lead them up to the present lesson by simply naming the principal intervening events. But I shall assume that you have not a well-trained class, and that your pupils have little or no recollection of the lessons that have gone before. With such a class it will not be sufficient to recall last Sunday's lesson because you will not reach the level of their minds. Remember the fundamental rule in all teaching, that you must begin

with that which is known and then proceed to that which is unknown, connecting the unknown with the known. If your children know nothing about the last lesson you must find something else that they know to which you can attach the lesson of the hour. Suppose the lesson is about one of Christ's miracles. What is the character of the miracle? Have your pupils ever learned anything about a miracle of like character? Recall that miracle. If you find that they have a particle of interest in it, you can begin with that and lead them on up to the present miracle by telling them that here we have another story like the one that interested them before. Suppose you have for your lesson the miracle of the wedding in Cana, and your children know nothing of the miracles of Jesus at all. In this case it is useless to begin with miracles. But you can begin with weddings, for there is not a child in your class who has never heard of a wedding. But here is a great danger. You can begin by talking about weddings in such a way as to lead the minds of your pupils off on an endless excursion through fields of fancy, and they will spend the rest of the lesson hour thinking of weddings that have been or of weddings that are to be. You want to interest them just enough to secure their attention, and then you want to lead their minds away from modern weddings back to

ancient Oriental weddings where they will not be tempted to wander off out of your reach. Describe an Oriental wedding and then when you have made it real to them bring Jesus to the wedding feast. Then their minds will be prepared for the story of the miracle at the wedding in Cana.

I know of nothing in the teacher's work that calls for so much skill as this matter of getting one's point of contact. It is easy enough to begin on a level with the pupil's knowledge, but you need to take care not to call anything to their minds that will absorb their attention so that they will lose sight of you. And you need to be careful not to begin with trifles. You cannot get your point of contact to any good purpose by talking to your pupils about the latest fashions, or about a forthcoming entertainment. You cannot link the lesson to things of this sort. Of course if you have a class of pick-ups, hoodlums, nondescripts fished out of sundry alleys, you may find it necessary to talk to them about almost anything that will secure their attention; but the moment you see any sign of interest you must lead them to something else of interest that will serve as a natural step towards the lesson itself.

XIV

HOW TO TEACH THE LESSON

WHEN you have succeeded in getting your point of contact—when you find that what you are saying is on a level with your pupils' minds and is arousing their interest—you are ready to lead them into the lesson itself. The important thing at this point is to lead them without delay. If you give them a single moment the minds which you have aroused will start on excursions of their own choosing, and you will have a hard time coaxing them back and getting them to take the road through the lesson which you have selected for them. Did you ever see an old man trying to catch a frisky colt on a frosty morning? That's the picture of many a sluggish teacher in his efforts to catch the minds of his pupils after he has allowed them to wander away.

You have now recalled the last lesson and have mentioned the intervening events. "This brings us"—I should say here—"to our lesson for to-day. And an exceedingly interesting lesson it is." Here I would open my Bible. "Let us turn to it. It is in the—what chap-

ter?" If no one knows just where it is don't waste any time over it. Call out the book and chapter yourself and ask Charlie to read the first verse. Are there any obscure words that need to be cleared up? Bring out the meaning in the fewest possible words and then ask the least attentive pupil in the class to read the second verse. The whole class might read the third, another inattentive boy the fourth, and so on. Keep your eyes open for inattentive pupils and give them something to do. I would vary the order of calling for the verses, and I would never let the pupils know the order. If Charlie knows that Robert will read the next verse he will not even look at it. *Keep all the class on duty all the time.* You cannot do this if you read the lesson yourself. The moment you begin every pupil will feel that he is off duty and nearly every one of them will slip away from you in spirit, though not in body, before you get through, unless the lesson happens to be a narrative of unusual interest.

When the reading is ended I would say something like, "Now let us see what we have here;" and without talking about it I would begin a rapid fire of questions designed to draw out from the pupils the principal facts of the lesson. I would not point out these facts; I would draw them out. Do not tell a pupil anything that you can get him to tell you.

You are not to throw facts at him with the hope that they will somehow find lodgment in his mind: you are to lead him up to the facts so that he can discover them for himself. And you should do this by questions. The younger a child the more important it is to put everything you can in the form of a question. You may lecture to grown people because they can concentrate their minds upon what you are saying. In other words, they can hold on to their own minds. A child does not have this power of concentration and you must get hold of his mind and hold it for him. The question is the hook with which you get hold of his mind and keep it from running away.

At first you may have difficulty in getting the children to answer at all. You will always find it hard to draw them out if you have been doing all the talking for some time. Have you not noticed how hard it is to say anything after somebody else has been monopolizing the conversation? From sheer stupidity, you say. Certainly; and you don't want to make your pupils stupid. Asking questions that are too hard has quite as bad an effect as too much talking. It forces the pupils to be silent, and if you keep them silent long they will not even feel like answering the easy questions which may come by and by. Ask your easy questions at the beginning. Indeed it is a good

plan sometimes to ask half a dozen questions which can be answered without any effort, just to get the pupils in the habit of answering. When the answers come back briskly make your questions a little harder. If the class grows dull make your questions easy again.

There are a great many points about the art of questioning which you will need to think over later. Just now it will be sufficient to attend to the few simple suggestions I have given and to watch carefully your manner in asking questions. Try to recall how you did it last Sunday. Did you throw your questions at your pupils in a careless, haphazard sort of way? Did you fire them at them out of a popgun? Did the tone of your voice say that you didn't believe they could answer, or you didn't care whether they did or not, or you were going to force them to answer whether or no? Did your questions *demand* answers or *invite* them? Did you imagine that you were a lawyer and that your pupils were on the witness stand? Did you act as some unwise parents I know who always question their children as if they were trying to catch them in something? Did you question them with all the ardour and tenderness of a lover trying to secure an answer to the one question?

XV

HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS

QUESTIONING is an art—one of the fine arts, if you will. Anybody can ask questions—anybody can ask a great many questions; but to ask questions that will open up the pupil's mind to the light and reveal to you what he knows, and then lead him on to the goal which you desire he shall reach—this is the test, the supreme test of the master teacher.

First of all, you want to ask questions that will reveal to you just what the pupil knows. These questions should draw out his knowledge of the last lesson. You do not need to ask many—three or four, as a rule, will serve your purpose. When you have found something that he knows you are ready to build upon it the things you want him to learn.

Then you should ask a few questions to find out whether the pupil has read the lesson text correctly. Does he know what it says? A great many people habitually misread things. Grown-up people do it as well as little children. Said Smith, "I see by the morning's paper that Willie Jones got hurt on his automobile."

"Sure?" said I. "Sure." "But Willie Jones does not own an automobile." "I don't know about that; it is what the paper said. I read it myself." Then I took up the paper and read how Willie Jones had been hurt by a passing automobile. Half the children in your class have very likely misread at least one or two verses in the lesson. You want to get the lesson text clearly before their vision.

The next thing is to ask questions that will clear up the meaning of the text. There are several obscure words and phrases which you do not want to explain yourself if you can get your pupils to explain them for you. Frequently if a child does not know what a word means you may ask several questions that will lead up to the meaning and will reveal it to him. It is always better to ask questions that will help the child to see the thing for himself than to point out the thing to him. In asking questions of this sort care must be taken not to consume too much time. Don't ask questions about things of little or no importance.

When you have gotten at the meaning of the text—that is to say when you have cleared up these difficult words and phrases so that your pupils will be able to repeat the lesson text in their own words and phrases, you will be ready to ask questions that will bring out the teaching of the lesson. This is the most difficult

task of all. A great many teachers, when they get to this point, don't know what to say next except to ask, "Now, what does the lesson teach us?" As a rule, when one has gotten to this point, no pupil is ready to tell what the lesson teaches. Besides, the lesson may teach a great many things and not merely one truth. You do not want to bring out everything the lesson teaches. You want to select some one important truth—the most important truth—the central truth of the lesson, and you want to ask a series of questions that will bring the pupil to that central truth. Don't ask what is the heart of the lesson. Lead him up to the heart of the lesson. The only way to do work of this sort effectively is to prepare for it beforehand. In the quiet of your own room you want to ask yourself, What is the gist of this lesson? What is it about? What can I get out of it for myself? The thing that you get out of it for yourself is very likely the thing you will want to teach your pupils. With this great central truth in view, make an outline of the lesson that will lead up to it. I would make this outline in the form of questions—just as few questions as will be necessary to lead from the beginning of the lesson on up to the central truth. These questions I would write down on a slip of paper, not for the purpose of taking them to the class on paper, but

for the purpose of taking them to the class in my mind. As a rule the questions which you write down on paper in their natural order will come to your mind in the same order while you are teaching. That is, if you make your questions clear, direct and to the point. You want to use very few words and you want those words to be of the simplest sort. A rambling, indefinite sort of a question will not fix itself in your mind, and if it should by any means turn up in your class, it will not be worth asking. These questions which you write down on paper before going to the class ought to be read over and studied and revised until you are sure that they have been put in the simplest, strongest and most direct language you can command. If you do this you will have no difficulty whatever in recalling them when in the act of teaching. Moreover, they will be impressed so deeply upon your mind that they will furnish an outline leading directly to the goal which will keep your own mind from wandering, and will save you from rambling, indefinite teaching.

Do not forget that the ultimate aim of all questioning is to lead the pupils up to and help them to grasp the great central truth of the lesson. It is not worth while to ask questions to win their attention unless you intend to win their attention to the lesson.

Teachers ask why they have so much difficulty in getting their pupils to answer questions. There are several reasons. Some teachers do not put their questions clearly. They are too indirect and too long. A question to be clear must be short and as straight as an arrow. Some questions go beyond the range of the pupil's knowledge. The wisest man in the world cannot answer that sort of a question. If your pupils are timid and need to be encouraged, ask them easy questions, but do not ask questions that are so absurdly simple as to make them feel that you are reflecting upon their intelligence. Make your questions concrete. Avoid abstractions. Don't talk about heroism and goodness but about heroes and good men. Don't talk about people and places in general but about people and places in particular. Occasionally I would ask a question of the whole class, but as a rule I would ask it of a particular pupil. And as a rule ask your question first and then call the name of the pupils you want to answer it. If you call the name of the pupil first the rest will feel that they are off duty for the moment and will cease to pay attention. For the same reason I would never ask questions of pupils in rotation. You are not going to get your pupils to answer well until you get them to listen well. The secret of prompt answers is to so teach the

lesson as to have the attention of all your pupils all of the time.

I would not do anything to *make* children answer questions. Probably one reason why your pupils don't answer your questions is because their teacher has been trying to force answers out of them. Children don't like to be approached with a crowbar. Stop trying to make them answer questions and try to learn the art of asking them so that they will want to answer. I know a teacher who can hardly finish a question before every child in the class is trying to answer.

In teaching very timid children I would begin by asking a few easy questions of the whole class and having the pupils answer in concert. Usually the most timid child can be induced to answer simple questions along with the rest. Of course answering in concert is not much of a mental exercise and it should be abandoned as soon as the more timid pupils have been drawn out by it. But care should be taken not to frighten these timid ones back into their shells by asking them difficult questions. Simple questions for the timid so long as they are timid.

I have known the diffidence of grown-up people in a class to be overcome by a simple expedient. The teacher would say: "Before beginning the lesson let us spend a few minutes

in a simple Bible drill. I am going to ask a few questions—you'll laugh at them because they are so simple perhaps—and I want you to answer them all together just as if you were children. The simplest things need to be often repeated to keep them clear in one's mind. Now, ready "—and then he would fire a dozen questions at them on, say, the names and order of the books of the Bible, and the class would answer in concert. Frequently the whole class would get into a glow of interest, the diffidence would all disappear, and the teacher would glide into the lesson before they were conscious of it.

Perhaps after all the most important thing in asking a question is the manner in which you ask it. I don't care what your question is, if you do not ask it in a way to invite an answer you are not likely to get the answer you want. Some teachers throw questions at their pupils as if they were stoning them, and then wonder why nobody seems disposed to answer. Cultivate a pleasing, spirited, cordial manner.

XVI

HOW TO ILLUSTRATE THE LESSON

IT goes without saying that the teacher must use illustrations, for illustrating is a large part of the teacher's work. For teaching is the art of making one see and grasp things, and the chief business of the teacher in many a lesson is simply to shed light upon things so that they will be clearly photographed upon the pupils' minds, and warmly welcomed into the pupils' hearts.

And to illustrate is to shed light. It is just that—nothing more, nothing less. Some teachers have an idea that an illustration is an anecdote, and they seem to think that the longer the story the better it will illustrate. If you can tell a story so that it will shed light—so that it will bring out more clearly and attractively the truth you are trying to teach—that story will be an illustration; but the fact that it is a story does not make it an illustration. There are teachers who spend half the time in class telling stories which have been suggested to them by the lesson, and imagine that they are illustrating the lesson, when they are only making their pupils forget it. A long story draws

the mind of the pupil so far away from the lesson that when it is through he has lost all idea of what the teacher set out to illustrate. And sometimes the teacher forgets, too. I would avoid all long stories for this reason if for no other, and I would avoid exciting stories for the same reason. Then, too, it is of the utmost importance to avoid all stories which open up a tempting field of fancy for young minds to roam in. I would never tell a Christmas story just before Christmas—not if I wanted my pupils to think of anything the rest of the lesson hour. Nor would I tell a picnic story at the picnic season.

I do not believe in the free use of stories—especially second-hand stories gotten out of books and papers. Now and then they may be used effectively, but more often they are used harmfully. I do not believe that it is worth while to amuse pupils just to interest them. If we would think of the pupils themselves as much as we think of plans to interest them we would not find it necessary to tell many stories in order to secure their attention. The best way in the world to interest boys is to take an interest in the boys themselves, and to show it by talking with them about what they are doing. Don't talk *to* them, talk *with* them. Drop into an easy conversation about some things that have interested them during the

past week and then watch your chance to lead up to the lesson. As a rule the chance is sure to come sooner or later—usually sooner than you will expect. Somebody will say something that will suggest something that is in the lesson, and before they know it you will have them in the very middle of it. Some teachers will tell you that it is dangerous to introduce such foreign matters into a class, and then they will go off and get a story out of a book a thousand miles further off. Story telling is a talent, but it is not a necessary talent, if you will sit down in the midst of your pupils, on their level, and begin where you find them. Boys are more interested in things they are doing and want to do than in all the stories in the world. Besides, when you talk with them about what they are doing the conviction grows upon them that you are interested in them, and you might tell a thousand stories without making them feel that you care a fig for them.

I would never tell more than one story in the course of a lesson, and frequently I would not tell any at all. There are easier and safer ways to illustrate. For example, you can often shed light on a truth you are trying to teach by calling attention to certain facts or events which come within the range of a child's every-day life. Sometimes a simple design on a blackboard or a writing pad (I would always carry a

writing pad to Sunday-school if I did not have a blackboard) will bring out a truth with surprising clearness. Occasionally I would use familiar objects as object lessons. Here, however, as in telling stories, one must be careful. An object lesson must not be too novel. It must not create a sensation. Chemical experiments before a class are interesting, but in a primary department they create such a sensation that the children never get back to the lesson again. The more familiar the object the better. Again it must not be something that the pupils will covet, or something that will awaken appetite. A prettily dressed doll may make what you will regard as a perfect love of an object lesson but to the little tots before you it will be a perfect love of a doll which they would dearly love to have for their very own. A glass of water is a very effective object lesson, but I would never use it on a warm day if I wanted to awaken anything in my pupils besides thirst.

Nevertheless there is nothing more helpful when used at the right time than an object lesson of the right sort. If you wanted to go to 'Frisco and you had your choice between a Pullman and an ox-cart, would you choose an ox-cart? If you wanted to reach the mind of a child, and you could reach it in one-half the time and with one-half the trouble through the

Eye-gate that it would take to reach it through the Ear-gate, should you choose the Ear-gate? We take to short routes and to time-saving inventions as a duck takes to water, and yet how slow we are to grasp the possibilities of the shortest route to the mind. I say "we"; I mean we Protestants; our Catholic friends learned the route long ago and they go by no other if they can help it. If the Catholic is more devoted to his church than the Protestant it is largely because of what the Catholic is made to see and handle while the Protestant is left to work it out with his imagination. And so many of us are lacking in imagination! One may say that Rome has overdone it, and perhaps she has, but any one who knows anything of the fundamental principles of teaching will tell us that we Protestants have neglected a great opportunity. We indulge in so many abstractions when we might give to our pupils something they can see with their own eyes. We talk of principles in general when we ought to show them things in the concrete. Many a teacher spends half an hour trying to explain a thing by word of mouth when a pencil and a slip of paper and two or three crooked marks would make it as clear as daylight in two minutes.

There are so many ways in which we might make use of the Eye-gate to our profit. We

use it a good deal in the primary department, when we might use it in all the departments.

We overestimate the strength of the average mind of the big boy and girl and even of the grown up. We think pictures and blocks are for little children, but we never outgrow the picture-and-block age. The profoundest thinker will listen to your talk as you walk with a yawn, and open his eyes wide with new interest the moment you stop to illustrate your proposition with a stick in the sand. There are few methods to reach the mind through the eye that are in use in the primary department which might not be adapted to our most advanced classes.

I would always choose my illustrations before going to the class. If you leave it to the inspiration of the moment you may not think of any illustrations at all, or those you think of may fail to illustrate. But do not forget to go first in your search for illustrations to your own every-day life. Cultivate the habit of asking about everything you see and hear, and read in the newspapers. What will this illustrate? There are no illustrations like home-made ones be they ever so homely. There is as much difference between telling something that you have seen with your own eyes and something you have read in a book, as there is between

the discourse of a preacher whose words come hot from his heart and a discourse read from the pulpit from a volume of South's Sermons. The printed sermon may be far better than the spoken, but, in the language of the street, it somehow fails to reach the spot. Next to something that has happened in your experience is something that you have read in the daily newspapers, because the daily paper is a record of the every-day life of our own day. Last of all you may go to a book; but don't if you can help it. And never—never at the peril of your life—go to an encyclopedia of illustrations. An encyclopedia of illustrations is a pretty good museum but a mighty poor tool chest.

There are hidden stores of illustrations locked up in your memory and visible stores of illustrations within the bounds of your vision—enough to last a lifetime. A book of illustrations on your study table is the greatest obstacle you can put in the way of learning the art of illustrating.

XVII

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF A BIBLE STORY

TO make the most of a Bible story, it must be used not as a picture to please but as an illustration to instruct. Whether drawn artistically with coloured chalks or roughly sketched with a quick, bold hand, it is given us not to criticize, but to teach us what we need to know.

In a certain school the lesson on Daniel and his temptation was presented by an intelligent teacher as a very beautiful but very old painting to be admired by the class. When the children went home of course they left the painting behind them. It was a magnificent opportunity shamefully wasted.

Suppose the teacher had said: "Now, children, here is a young man severely tempted. Let us watch him and see how he overcomes his temptation so that we may know what to do when we are tempted." That would have been better than placing on exhibition an old painting. See how practical it could be made. First, they have a look at the youth. What sort of a youth must Daniel have been, to overcome

such a temptation? Then they would look at the temptation. What made the king's meat so hard to resist? In the first place Daniel was very young—at the very age when such a temptation is strongest. In the second place, he was away from home. Temptations are always strongest when away from home—out of sight of mother and playmates and the people that know you. In the third place, he might have said: "I am in Babylon; why not do as Babylon does? Why be peculiar?" No boy wants to be peculiar. "What's the use of being the only one in the crowd who refuses to drink?" "What's the use of making a scene?" Then he might have said, "I'll get my new friends in trouble." The young man at his first dinner party says something like that. "Why offend my hostess by refusing this wine when she has been so kind to me?" Then he might have said, "What harm is there in the meat and wine in itself?" And, finally, it was a matter of life and death with him—just as it is a matter of life and death with every boy when he is about to decide about that first drink.

Now the interesting question would come up: How did he overcome? In the first place, he started at the beginning. He stopped before he began. He did not indulge a few days with the intention of stopping as soon as

it could be done without a scene. In the second place, he purposed in his heart. He said, Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I will not touch it. Not many boys start out that way. "I expect to be a temperance man, of course; but as to never taking a glass of wine, I don't care to make any rash promises." Such a boy's purpose to be a temperance man is not of the sink or swim variety. In the third place, he went to work to carry his purpose into effect. He made arrangements to keep the temptation out of his way. And last, but not least, God helped him—as God helps every young man who starts in life with the right purpose in his heart.

Then the teacher would talk about the rewards; the benefit of abstinence to the body and the mind and the social standing; and above all the soul's standing; and how that benefit, unlike propping up on beer, is permanent.

And finally the teacher would lead his pupils up to the conclusion of the whole matter:

"Dare to be a Daniel!"

XVIII

PRESSING HOME THE CENTRAL TRUTH

IT is not worth while to ask questions to awaken the minds of your pupils unless you are going to use their awakened minds to grasp the central truth of the lesson. Now and then you will have a lesson in which the central truth is not apparent. It may teach several truths and no one of them may appear more prominent than the rest. In such a case you should choose the truth that has made the deepest impression upon your own heart. You may sometimes miss the mark but you are not likely to go far wrong. The important thing is to have one great truth to press home and to have one only.

This is a matter you can never afford to forget. A great many teachers fail to teach anything because they try to teach too many things. It is worth while to remember that the brain of a child is of limited capacity. Most of our brains are, for that matter. You can put so much into one's head at a time, and no more. This is as true of the heart as of the head. Teachers have found out by experience that if you would put anything into the head

of a child in order that it may find its way into his heart you must insert only one truth at a time. Teach only one truth and it may find its way into his heart. Crowd his brain with several truths and the probability is that nothing will find its way down into his heart.

A lesson makes an impression very much like a picture. If a picture has no central figure or central theme it is not likely to make a lasting impression of any sort. You have seen Munkacsy's "Christ before Pilate." You have never forgotten it. You will never forget it because you cannot forget its central figure. If Christ had not been brought out so prominently —if He had been placed in the picture along with the crowd—the picture as a whole would probably have left no impression upon you at all. You would not see it in your mind's eye as you see it to-day. Yet it is the whole picture that you see and not Christ only.

I would handle this whole matter in this way: Here is a lesson—to illustrate—on the healing of the nobleman's son at Cana. In the preparation of this lesson I would ask, "What is it in this lesson that impresses me most?" Clearly it is the fact that this man who knew so little about Jesus was willing to take Him at His word. This interests me, for probably the hardest thing I ever tried to do was to take Jesus at His word, when I knew as little about

Him as this Roman officer did. And this will interest my pupils, for they have had the same experience. And some of them are thinking very hard of God to-day for requiring them to take Him at His word.

I would think over this matter a while. I would make it very personal. Do I take Jesus at His word? Am I not continually longing for something to happen that will demonstrate to me the truth of what He has told me? Do I not sometimes feel inclined to murmur against God who gave the early disciples so many miracles to help their faith and who has denied these miracles to me? Am I willing to take Him at His word?

Until I can answer this question as it ought to be answered I should not go a step further. The very moment I have answered it, however, I will be filled with a desire to lead my pupils up to the point where they will be willing to take Jesus at His word. Then I will say to myself, "Now I am going to teach this lesson for the sole purpose of bringing my pupils to the point of taking Jesus at His word. I am going to picture Jesus in such a light that it will be easy for them to take Him at His word. I shall have no other purpose, no other thought. Every question that I may ask, every incident that I may relate, every verse that I may quote, every word or look or deed, shall

be to this single end. If I can go to my class in this frame of mind I will be in no danger of rambling, of teaching a little of this and a little of that, of clipping up the lesson and serving it as so much Scripture hash, of losing a moment's time trying to decide what point to bring out next. My aim shall shine out before me as clear as a star in the heavens, and I shall follow that star as straight as an arrow."

XIX

HOW TO CLOSE THE LESSON

WHEN you have gotten at the meaning of the lesson, what do you do with it? I know some very fine folk who do nothing with it. They tell us that it is unscholarly to study a thing for any other purpose than to know, and they like to be scholarly. It sounds well to be scholarly. Professor Up-to-date Sophocles spends an hour in his Sunday-school class discussing the measurements of Noah's ark. Next Sunday he will run his yardstick up the Tower of Babel. The pupils wonder what there is in it for them, but Professor Sophocles does not tell them. "We study the truth for truth's sake," says the professor, and he repels with scorn the base suggestion that the truth can be put to practical uses. But ordinary folk don't mind putting the little they learn to practical uses, and if I find anything in the lesson I am going to ask what there is in it for me. If a man studies the Bible simply for the sake of knowing, he may become the greatest scholar in the world, but he will not necessarily become a better man. If you want to know simply in order to

know, there is no special reason why you should study the Bible—you might try Plato. But if you want to know in order to *do*, you will find nothing to equal the Bible, for therein is all the wealth of knowledge that sheds light on the path of duty. "Noah built the ark; let us see how he built it," says the professor. Well enough, but before he is through with his measurements the lesson hour is over. Of course it is interesting, and much of it is necessary, but you and I want something more. We are not going to learn how Noah was saved unless we learn about his ark, but we must not stop with his ark. We want something that will help us in building our own ark. I want to be saved —like Noah. And so when I learn that Noah built the ark, I ask, What is there in it for me? And when I look into the matter, I find that Noah built the ark in obedience to God's command and according to God's instructions. This is the kernel of the matter. This is the thing that makes the story worth while. Noah was saved because he did what God told him to do, and did it in the way God told him to do it. Now I will go and do likewise. To-day, to-morrow, through all the days to come, by God's help I am going to do what He tells me to do, and I am not going to insist on having my own way. I am going to do it according to His instructions. This may sound

old-fashioned, but I'd rather get at the kernel of the matter, even at the risk of being out of fashion.

A lesson should be brought to a close by pressing home to the hearts of the pupils the heart of the lesson. How this should be done depends upon the pupils, the lesson and the hour. A mere exhortation will not do; frequently it is the worst thing you can do. When the pupils have the truth clearly in their minds you want to press it down into their hearts. Don't think of driving it home; think of pressing it home. Some teachers would do better work if they could rid their minds of the image of driving nails home, and put in its place the thought of the gentle pressure of a loving hand. Often the best thing to do after the truth has been made clear is to pause until every one is perfectly quiet and attentive and then tell as impressively as you can a simple heart-story illustrating the truths you are teaching. Tell it slowly and allow no one to interrupt you, and when you have spoken the last word remain silent a moment to give time for the story to do its work. And remember, you want a story that appeals to the heart, or none at all. Sometimes it is well to ask the pupils to write down on paper the message which they think the lesson has for them. What does it teach them that they ought to be, or do?

Or what do they find in the lesson that they think will be of the most help to them? Often a good way to press home a lesson is to show the pupils a picture relating to it or illustrating its central truth. Of course the picture should be kept out of sight and no mention made of it until the moment you are to show it. You can do this in a way that will create a deep impression and you can do it in a way that will create no impression at all. If you have an appropriate poem—something short and tender—you might repeat it at the close of the lesson slowly and in a low voice. At another time if you have a beautiful text or quotation containing the very cream of the lesson, or its most important truth, repeat it and then have all the pupils repeat it in concert.

Whatever may be chosen to close with, let it be warm, tender, inspiring. All difficulties, all those points which suggest unprofitable discussion, all seeming harshness should be gotten out of the way early in the lesson. If Sinai thunders, give the echo time to die out. If you must utter a word of rebuke, utter it and get it out of the way. If you find yourself bursting with that little joke, tell it early in the lesson (it is better to tell it than burst), and get rid of it. Everything should be gotten out of the way that there may be room for the still small voice. And you should plan your lesson so that these

last words shall be spoken during the last minutes of the lesson hour. They may as well remain unspoken if the lesson is hurried through with in order to have five minutes at the end to "talk about something else."

XX

OTHER TEACHING POINTS

NOTHING interests us like folks. You can awaken interest in the dullest lesson if you will only put people in it. Everybody is attracted by the human element. Everybody likes to hear about people. Everybody devours the personal column in the newspapers, and women, at least, read the marriages and deaths, which are interesting personals. This inborn interest in our fellows is a mighty force in the development of character. Is that boy in your class without ambition? Give him a story of a flesh-and-blood hero. If it does not stir him it will be because there is nothing in him to stir.

2. You never know what you are really teaching until you hear from your pupils. A wise teacher seeks expression from his pupils at every step. To try to teach a silent class is like trying to do a very delicate piece of work in the dark: you never know when you hit or when you miss, though you may be sure that as a rule you miss. Getting a pupil to speak his mind not only clarifies a matter and fixes it in his mind, but it sheds light for you to work

by as well. You know what you are doing and what to do next.

3. Don't try to teach the meaning of a verse without regard to its surroundings. Texts of Scripture are not nuggets of gold scattered along the road to heaven to toll us upward, but rather they are inseparable links of a golden chain stretched along the way for our guidance. It is a silly habit we have of chopping off a link as the notion takes us to try to make it do the duty of the whole chain.

4. It may be true that the sole business of the teacher of mathematics is to make the lesson clear, but it is not true of the teacher of the Bible. In the Sunday-school we do not teach our pupils simply in order that they may know; we teach them in order that they may do, and we have learned that merely making a lesson clear seldom moves one to do anything. When the lesson is made clear so that the mind will take it in, it must then be presented so that the heart will take it in. It must be laid on the conscience.

5. Should a teacher attempt to answer a question the discussion of which is likely to awaken doubt? As a rule I would not attempt to answer a question of this sort in class unless I saw that other pupils besides the questioner were interested. In this event evading the question might do more harm than even an

awkward attempt to answer it. If one or two pupils only are interested I would promise to talk over the matter with them privately. In that event, however, I would be careful not to suggest more doubts than are already in the pupils' minds. One may do that by one's manner as easily as by what one may say. Better not attempt to answer at all than to hesitate or betray anxiety or act as though you felt that you were in a tight place.

6. Keep your Bible closed so that you may look at your pupils. The teacher who does not use his eyes in teaching keeps his best talent hidden in a napkin. A good pair of eyes properly used will do more to hold attention and to keep up the current of sympathy between your teacher and pupil than anything else you possess. Look straight into the eyes of your pupils all of the time.

7. One reason why some children take no interest in Bible stories is because they have not the slightest idea where the incidents related occurred. To make a story interesting it must be given a local habitation as well as a name. A child must see the place and the people. The cure for a great deal of the prevailing indifference to Bible history is a faithful study of Bible geography. Get the children thoroughly interested in the land of the Book and you will have little difficulty in getting them interested

in the Book. The most pressing need of many a class is a map and a teacher who knows how to use it. Never mind about a bought map. A simple outline on a blackboard or on a sheet of paper is better. What you want is not merely to own a map, but to use the map you own.

8. Partiality is a great evil, but it is worth while to remember that children are apt to think you are partial at times whatever you do, and that it is better to show kindness at the risk of appearing partial than not to show kindness at all.

9. The average teacher's greatest mistake is in taking it for granted that our pupils understand what we are saying, when as a matter of fact our sentences are about as liable to get twisted on the way into their little heads as they are to keep straight. A little child especially is apt to turn the sentence to suit that which is already uppermost in his mind.

10. The average young girl usually shields herself from her teacher's efforts to lead her to Christ by insisting that she never does any harm and therefore does not need to repent like other people. Set before her a picture that will show her the absurdity of her position. For example, you hire a man to work on your farm. At the end of the year he comes to you with a statement of what he has done, expecting a

settlement. "I have been a very inoffensive labourer," he says; and he begins to tell you how he has never done you any harm; how he did not sow tares in your wheat while you slept; how he did not pull up all your corn, and tear down your fences, and cut down the best trees in your orchard. You soon grow very tired of that. What a dunce he is to think you will pay him for what he hasn't done! Now this world is a great plantation, and God is the landlord of every one of us tenants. No other view of life will explain anything we see about us. There cometh a harvest and a time of reckoning. Empty-handed you go up to the judgment. Before you and behind you walk men burdened with many sheaves. The eyes of the Master are turned inquiringly upon you, and a burning flush mantles your conscious cheek. Where are your sheaves? "Lord, *I have done no harm!*"

11. "Is it best to try to teach after I become weary?" No. But pray, why should a teacher grow weary in the midst of his teaching? You may feel as limp as a dish-rag when the lesson is over, but if you are thoroughly interested in your work you will not be conscious of a particle of weariness while the lesson is being taught. When a teacher is weary in the lesson you may be sure he is weary of the lesson.

12. "Is it best to try to teach after the

children have become weary?" No. This does not mean, however, that no further effort should be made to teach during the lesson hour. Some teachers stop the moment they see signs of weariness, and spend the rest of the hour in idle gossip. I would suspend the lesson long enough to rest the pupils and then begin again.

13. You want life in your class of course, but do not imagine that you can get it by working up your pupils to a high pitch of excitement. "We had a glorious time last Sunday: you should have seen how I kept those children excited all the time." Poor teacher! it did not occur to him that while animation makes one's head as clear as a bell, when one is excited one has no head at all.

14. The best way to deal with doubt is to love the doubter enough to be patient with him, and to resist the temptation to ridicule him. A doubter was never cured by calling him a fool. I think this after all is our greatest mistake in dealing with young men who are afflicted with doubt. It does not make so much difference whether we can clarify their minds or not if we will only be forbearing, and if our sympathy will be without any admixture of pity. The spell will be over in the course of time, and the young man's mind will clear up of itself, if only those around him will make no mistake.

15. A teacher may and should make an ap-

peal to his pupils as a whole to accept Christ, but he should not single out a pupil and appeal to him in the presence of his companions. It is always a perilous experiment to approach a man about a sacredly private matter in the presence of others. And it is even more perilous to approach a child. A man resents your efforts to uncover his heart in public; he does not even want you to point to it. If he should become wrought up sufficiently to expose it himself that is another matter. A child guards his feelings even more jealously, partly because of greater timidity and partly because he is conscious that he lives in an unsympathetic atmosphere. A man may be persuaded that he is surrounded by friends who can enter into his feelings and who are longing to help him carry his heart's burden; but a child knows too well that Jimmy who has just turned his head is in a broad grin, and that the snicker which he distinctly heard a moment ago in the direction of the big boy in the class foretells innumerable woes that will befall him when he is on the street again. But should not a child be taught that he should confess Christ in spite of persecution? Certainly; but it is not a matter of confession; it is a matter of decision —the decision that precedes confession. When he has once decided for Christ the big boy's snicker will be shorn of at least half its terrors.

You have learned that if you want to get two people to love each other you need to be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove. Whatever you do you will not do in public. Would you—unless you were a foolish, tormenting tease—talk to a boy in the presence of his companions about his love, or his lack of love, for his mother, or his sister, or even somebody else's sister? I know that children as well as men have been singled out in the great congregation and won for Christ while a hundred pairs of eyes were looking curiously on; but I also know that when others have been thus approached their hearts have shut up like oysters and they have experienced a revulsion of feeling towards religion that has remained with them until this day. It may sometimes be necessary to run this risk in the case of a man who will be out of your reach the moment he passes out of the church door, but it is not necessary in the case of a Sunday-school pupil. The teacher who appeals to his pupils personally before the class on the ground that he has no other time in which to win souls is evidently too busy to be a Sunday-school teacher. I would not run the risk of spoiling all my work that way. I would watch my pupils and whenever I saw, by looking into the eyes of a child, that the way to his heart was open, I would find the time to talk to him alone. And I would find it quickly. I

would take a long walk with him in the fields that very afternoon, and in the hallowed Sabbath quiet I would help him, God helping us both, to settle that question forever.

16. It is the teacher's business to translate the Bible into the terms of our twentieth century life; to get down beneath its Oriental covering and find its very soul—its essential teaching—and to present it to the pupil in such language as he can understand, applying it not to the Israelites or the Ammonites of old, but to the pupil's own heart and life.

17. It is well enough for a teacher to call a spade a spade, but it is never necessary for him to call a simpleton a simpleton. It is one thing to be frank; it is another thing to be brutally blunt.

18. One Sunday-school teacher is all sunshine and wins; another, having no sunshine in his soul, undertakes to keep his class merry with stale jokes, and wonders why he does not succeed. It is the difference between being whitewashed and washed white.

19. It is the teacher's business to adapt his teaching to the needs of his pupils, but he ought not to say anything in class that would cause a pupil to feel that he was "hitting at him." That sort of thing never does any good and often does a great deal of harm.

XXI

HOW TO KEEP THE PUPILS INTERESTED

IT is not an easy problem but I am persuaded that it would not be as hard as many of us have found it if we were not always trying to solve it backwards. It is strange that we should be continually asking what will keep our pupils interested, and never think to ask what will keep the teacher interesting. For here, after all, is the secret of permanent interest in a class. The thing that is needed to interest pupils is not an interesting occasion, or an interesting lesson, or an interesting story, or an interesting picture, but simply and solely an interesting teacher. An interesting teacher will make an occasion, a lesson, a story, a picture or anything else under the sun interesting. An uninteresting teacher dulls the interest that may already exist in whatever he takes in hand.

Nearly all the methods ever invented to awaken the interest of pupils are worthless because they are the result of taking hold of this problem at the wrong end. They are purely artificial, like our much advertised methods for aiding the memory, and they are not one whit more successful. We may work up a mo-

mentary interest by an artifice, but the permanent interest of the pupils cannot be secured in this way. Only a permanently interesting teacher can permanently interest his pupils.

What can a teacher do to make himself interesting to his pupils? Did you ever notice how some young girls try to make themselves interesting on entering society? One goes to work to gather together a fund of interesting stories. Another searches an encyclopedia of wit and humour for bright sayings. Another, too indolent for either of these efforts, depends upon gush—artificial gush. Another walks out upon the carpet with a year's supply of imported smiles. You know how well, or how ill, these things work. But here is another girl who has somehow learned that it is not that which we gather from without but that which we develop within that makes us interesting, and she goes to work to develop herself—her mind and her heart. She seeks the broadest culture, without which it is impossible to have perfect sympathy with all men; without which she cannot get *en rapport* with all men. She finds a little sweetness of disposition in her nature and she goes to work to develop that. She forms the habit of interesting herself in people, of sympathizing with people. She keeps her eyes wide open watching for opportunities to lend a helping hand, by which her humanity—her

humanness—is daily broadened. She studiously cultivates the art of thinking about people until people become the most interesting things in the world to her; and when they become the most interesting things in the world to her she is pretty apt to become the most interesting girl in the world to at least some people.

It is by the same method that a teacher must become interesting to his pupils. Have you a class of girls? Go to work to learn girls. Cultivate the habit of thinking about girls. Look for them on the street—everywhere. Live as far as you can in the girl world. Learn not only the ways of girls—their ways do not mean a great deal—but learn what they think and feel; learn not so much what they do as what they intend to do or would like to do. You cannot judge a girl by her actions. It is not often that she does what she intends to do—not often that she knows why she does a thing at all. Cultivate the habit of thinking of girls until a girl becomes the most interesting thing in the world, just because she is a girl—interesting whether she is pretty or ugly, good mannered or bad mannered, neat or slovenly. You may be sure that when a girl has come to be the most interesting thing in the world to you it will not be long before you will become the most interesting teacher in the world to your girls.

Have you a class of boys? Learn boys. Rather, learn as much of them as you can. Go every day to Boyville. Form the habit of looking straight into the eyes, not critically but sympathetically, of every boy you meet. If you find nothing good in those eyes don't try any longer. Turn your class over to the superintendent and try a class of girls. You have no business with boys if you see nothing good in them. Get acquainted with boys—not only your boys but other people's boys. Form the habit of interesting yourself in every boy you meet regardless of the sort of boy. Interest yourself in him simply because he is a boy. When the time comes that a boy shall be the most interesting thing in the world to you there will be some boys at least in your class who will regard you as the most interesting teacher in the world.

I do not mean that when you find yourself in sympathy with your pupils you will have nothing to do to keep them interested. You should be in such sympathy with them that you will always be doing something to interest them. You will study them so thoroughly and you will study your lesson so thoroughly that it will be almost impossible for you to bore them.

You have noticed that there are some teachers who are very dry and uninteresting because

they have grown up with very narrow or partial views of the truth given them to teach. It is surprising how many teachers there are whose narrow views of the Christian life utterly disqualify them for their work. No teacher can be interesting and be narrow. That is why I have said that a teacher to be interesting must go to work to develop himself. He must acquire breadth of view. Here is a man who has a reputation for business integrity. He is very proud of his good name in the community. Talk with him and you will find that in his mind religion is summed up in one word—honesty. To him the most highly developed Christian is the man who has the highest sense of business honour. Nothing else appeals to him. This man neglects most of the means of grace and does scores of things a Christian ought not to do and yet he is perfectly satisfied with his attainments in grace because of his unquestioned business integrity. This man is as dry a teacher as you will come across in a dry season. There is never anything to talk about in the lesson unless there is something to suggest a discussion about business integrity. And it is the same old sermon year in and year out. It is enough to make a healthy boy hate honesty. Here is a good woman who has summed up religion in another word. It is temperance. Temperance is her

hobby. Temperance is the thing on which she gets intoxicated. She is always in a state of intoxication. To this good woman every lesson is a temperance lesson. It matters not where it begins it always ends in temperance. And it is the same old thing Sunday after Sunday. I wonder that her boys do not grow up drunkards for very spite. Any one-sided or partial view of truth continually presented becomes tiresome. The teacher who seeks to be interesting will shun narrow and partial views. He will go to work to get at the whole truth. He will seek that larger view of religion which will fairly burden him with its richness and breadth so that when he goes to his class his great difficulty will be not to keep from teaching the same thing, but to keep from trying to teach too many things.

XXII

THE SECRET OF GOOD ORDER

WHAT is good order? Perhaps some of us would have less difficulty in keeping order in our classes if we had a clearer idea of what good order means. Did you ever walk through a great mill at the close of the day after the operatives had all gone? Look at those long rows of spindles. How regular they are! How orderly! How quiet! You can hear a pin drop. Here is perfect order, you say. Well, yes: the order of death. But that is not the kind of order you want in your Sunday-school class. I have seen classes of that sort—classes in which the teacher had spent all of his time in quieting his pupils into silent rows of spindles—silent spindles which receive nothing, produce nothing. Did you ever walk through that same mill in the early morning after the wheels had started? There are the endless rows of spindles in the same regular order that they were before. But in every spindle there is life. And there is the sound of life; not the jarring sound of something out of order, but a healthy hum—the hum that is music to the ear of the

master machinist who knows that all is well. This is the kind of order you want in your Sunday-school: you want every pupil in his place and about his business. You do not want a row of silent pupils like idle machines, nor do you want to hear a noise as of something out of order; but you want a row of pupils in each of whom there is life—enough life to send forth a healthy hum. Don't aim at absolute silence in your class. Don't aim at death; aim at life.

The wise teacher has learned that there are two great secrets of good order. The first is good order in the teacher himself. Now don't turn red in the face. I am not going to be too personal. But as a matter of fact there are thousands of teachers who have never learned how to keep order themselves. There are thousands of teachers who create such a disturbance in trying to maintain order that their pupils are tempted to answer back, "Why don't you be still yourself?" To be orderly one must have one's self well in hand. And it is not every teacher who has himself well in hand. Disorder breeds disorder, but disorder in a teacher breeds ten times as much disorder as disorder in a pupil. There are teachers whose very attitude when they meet the class is an invitation to disorder. All noise is not disorder and all disorder is not noise. We have

good order in a class when things are done in an orderly way; when the right thing is done at the right time; when each pupil is attending to the duty of the moment and not to something else. Disorder is the result of attending to something else, and it is a painful fact that the average teacher is just as apt to wander from the matter at hand and attend to something else as the average pupil. I have seen teachers who were so anxious to keep order that they would never give their attention to the lesson more than half a minute at a time. They would turn to the lesson, and before the attention of the pupils could be gained they would allow their own attention to be drawn off by any passing trifle. "Now, children, let us see what the lesson is about. John, put your feet down. What is the lesson about, Mary? By the way, Mary, were you here last Sunday? What is the golden text? Did I ask you the last question, Sallie? What was the last lesson about? Oh! didn't I ask that question before? I wonder why the library isn't open this morning. Don't you know what the lesson is about? Mary, what are you and Sallie so deeply interested in?" And so it goes on and on, until the signal bell rings, and the poor teacher cannot for the life of her understand why there is so much disorder in her class. I visited a Sunday-school in which the

disorder during the singing fairly drowned the singing, and I noticed that two-thirds of the teachers were engaged in conversation with their pupils. Remember, a teacher is disorderly whenever he turns the attention from the matter in hand.

The other great secret of order is in securing and holding the attention of the pupils. Did you ever know a pupil to be disorderly while he was intent upon what you were saying? He may not sit up straight; his feet may not be placed at proper angles on the floor; but he is not disorderly. If you could get all the pupils in your class to be intent upon what you were saying would you not have perfect order? Children are like ponies. If you will hold a pony firmly by the bridle he will stand perfectly still—as a rule. It is the firm hold, not the uncertain hold, that keeps him still. If you tug at the bridle one moment and let it fall lax the next, if the bridle slips from your hand, he is not likely to be still. And if you pull the bridle off his head he will be gone in a flash. If you will keep a child interested every moment you will hold him as safely as if you had a bridle on him; but if you make an effort at attention now and then, if you relax your hold now and then, if you let him go altogether with the intention of securing his attention again after a while, he will be off in a flash.

And the moment he is off he will be out of order; he will be a creator of disorder. The great secret is to gain the attention of your pupils at the beginning and to require yourself to hold their attention to the end. I do not mean at the beginning of the lesson but from the moment you take your seat in the class. One reason why it is difficult to secure order during the lesson is because we so often allow disorder up to the moment the lesson begins. The only safe rule is to require order from the beginning, and to do this the teacher should be, if possible, the first to reach the class room.

"How can I hold the attention of my pupils during the time when there is nothing to do?" There is no time in which there is nothing to do. If you have not found something to occupy every moment of the Sunday-school hour go and find it, and if you have any spare moments left ask your superintendent to help you fill them. One of the greatest problems of the progressive teacher is to find enough minutes in the Sunday-school hour to do all the work he has planned to do.

"But there are some duties which the teacher must attend to which do not directly concern his pupils. How, for instance, can I keep my class quiet while I am making out my reports?" Why, bless you, have your pupils help you make them out. I would do it somewhat in

this way: "Now, children, we are going to put ourselves on record in this book. Let us see. Were we all present on time this morning?" And while their minds are occupied with your question fill in your attendance column and your tardy column. "Did we all know our lesson this morning?" And while they are thinking over this matter set down the lesson percentages. And so on. Make it a rule never to have anything to do during the Sunday-school hour apart from your pupils. Do not allow yourself to separate yourself from them either bodily or mentally for a moment. Be one with them. Stay with them in person, in thought, in heart, in interest; and in all likelihood they will stay with you.

XXIII

COMMON SENSE IN TEACHING

IT is not the knowledge one acquires but the knowledge that one uses that is worth while. To make use of what you learn, one thing is absolutely necessary. That one thing is common sense. I know that most of us feel that we are not lacking in this particular, but I also know that most of us are too well satisfied to believe we have common sense while neglecting to put it into practice. As a matter of fact, if we have it in any marked degree we will put it into practice. We *must* put it into practice if our knowledge of any sort is ever to be worth anything to us. And nowhere in the world, it seems to me, does one need to bring one's common sense into practice oftener than in the Sunday-school class.

Let me illustrate: If there is too much in a lesson to be taught in the lesson half hour, I would not try to crowd it in; I would select a part of it for comprehensive treatment and devote the time to that. And I would spend the time in teaching the things that we understand, not in discussing to no profit the things

which have been discussed to no profit for a thousand years. Again, if I were teaching a temperance lesson, I would not spend, or misspend, the precious moments telling tear-compelling stories of homes ruined and hearts broken and hungry children in rags as a result of intemperance. One may force from little children a bucketful of tears without getting into their minds a single helpful thought. It is better to leave our own stock of stories at home and give the whole hour to the picture which the lesson furnishes. We may rest assured that no picture of our own making will be more lifelike or more convincing.

Yet, again, I would not try to explain that which no child can understand. For instance, when you have a lesson on the deluge, a pupil, who has seen in so-called Bible story books blood-curdling pictures of mothers with babes in their arms drowning in the flood, will want to know how God could have done such a thing. Now one might give a satisfactory answer on this point to a mature mind, but one cannot explain it to a child, and one had better not attempt it. I would rather say to the pupil: "Well, that is the way it looks at a distance, but don't you suppose if we had been there and understood it all we would not have thought of charging God with wrong in the matter?" And then I would recall some things which the

Scriptures tell us which show the goodness of God and His love for little children.

When the lesson is an account of an event I would picture the scene, and I would make it my chief business to keep the picture before my pupils. I would avoid introducing any unnecessary outside material. I would not indulge in excursions. For instance, if the story is about blind Bartimeus, I would not dwell at length on other cases of blindness in the Bible, nor upon the prevalence of blindness in the East. I would not introduce any incidents by way of illustration. The lesson is the best illustration we can find to teach the lesson it is intended to teach. I would first make the pupils see Bartimeus. They should not only realize his helplessness, but the state of his mind. While others see in Jesus a prophet of Nazareth, he sees the Messiah. When I had succeeded in getting Bartimeus before them I would try to make them see Jesus. I would open up His heart to them, and I would try to make them see Him as Bartimeus stands before Him. It will hardly be necessary to moralize upon the lesson at all if one can get his pupils to see the picture.

Common sense as well as God's law requires us to be perfectly honest with our pupils. A great many teachers are not honest in their teaching. They don't mean to be dishonest,

yet they do not hesitate to take advantage of the ignorance of their pupils. For instance, as I have said before, many an intelligent teacher has used the account of the beheading of John the Baptist as a lesson against the evils of the modern dance, when every intelligent teacher knows that it can be fairly quoted only as a warning against witnessing lewd performances. We never gain anything by trying to teach a practical lesson from a text that does not teach it, although it may be taught in other parts of the Bible. The smallest boy in the class will be quick to recognize the difference between the solitary dance of the indecent Salome and the modern dances in which the sexes mingle, and we cannot safely point to the one as a warning against the other. The lesson is a warning against witnessing indecent performances of every sort, and if the teacher would speak of the evils of the ballroom he should make it plain that he does not draw his lesson from Herod's banquet.

XXIV

HONESTY IN TEACHING

WHAT are we trying to teach? Are we teaching what we really believe to be true or only what we are supposed to believe is true? Are we sure of our ground? Do we teach things to-day which may have to be untaught to-morrow? Take for instance the matter of prayer. When we teach our pupils about prayer do we teach only that which will stand the test? Or do we tell them things which they will find out when they are older are not true? Here is John Jones in the senior class turning up his nose. What is the matter with John? Why, John's teacher, when he was a little fellow, taught him that all he had to do when he wanted anything was to ask God for it, believing that he would receive it, and he would surely get it. Johnny tried it and it didn't work. To-day you can't get him to listen to anything about prayer: he is too busy turning up his nose. A dishonest teacher—a teacher who taught what she knew was not true—has done the work and she has turned out a horrible job. It is an awful thing to make promises for God which He never authorized us to make.

God has nowhere told us that all we need to do when we want anything is to go to Him in faith and we shall have it. He has promised to answer prayer in His own way and in His own time under certain conditions, and you and I who speak for Him have no right to teach a pupil that God answers prayer without clearly stating the conditions and explaining what is meant by answering prayer. I do not know anything about which we do so much loose thinking and about which we say so many senseless things that we don't believe as this matter of prayer. And our loose thinking and pious twaddle are doing untold damage. When you shake a man's faith in a prayer-answering God you shake him to the foundations, and his faith will inevitably be shaken if you give him a false picture of God at the beginning—a picture that will not stand the test in after life. God answers prayer, but He may not choose to answer it in the way we think He ought to answer it, or at the time our little wildly ticking watches call for an answer, and He certainly will not answer at all if we do not fulfill the conditions which He has laid down.

A poor woman comes to me for bread. I go down town and secure a position for her as a seamstress. The next day she comes to me again. "Did I not do what you wanted me to do?" I ask. "But I didn't want work,"

whines the poor thing; "I wanted bread." Do you think I will go to the baker and send her a ready-made loaf? And yet have I not answered her prayer? "Give me this day my daily bread," cries lazy Jake. God has given lazy Jake a little piece of land out in the mountains—given it to him through his father —and He has given him all the health and muscle and mind he needs, and as much sunshine and rain as He has given anybody else, and the little farm is all grown up in weeds and lazy Jake is still wearing holes in his trousers at the knees asking God for his daily bread. Will God send him a loaf from the bakery to convince him that He answers prayer? "The Lord has been feeding me these thirty years," said old Tom Twaddle at the prayer-meeting, "and I never have to worry a minute about my daily bread. I just trust Him and praise His name and somehow the bread always comes." But everybody knew that the Lord had been caring for old Tom all along through a faithful wife who for thirty years had kept a boarding-house to keep the lazy rascal from starving.

If God in answer to my prayer for bread gives me the ability to make bread, and I refuse to use the ability given me, and continue to cry for bread, I may cry till the crack of doom and there will be no answer. When in an ugly mood my child cast away the piece of

bread his mother gave him and demanded cake did he get it? God is infinite in mercy but He does not humour our childishness.

But suppose I do my best with the means God has given me, or suppose I have become helpless and can no longer make my bread? Then, if I recognize God as my Father—if I love Him as a Father, and treat Him as a Father —I can go to Him with perfect confidence that He will give me not everything that I may ask for, but everything that I ought to have. In other words, I can go to Him with the assurance that He will treat me as His child. If I am God's child He is not going to give me everything I ask for, but He is going to answer my prayer according to His will and it is not His will to ruin His children by giving them things they ought not to have.

XXV

IF YOUR PUPILS ARE TO BE LIKE CHRIST

IT is a lifetime study—a lifetime apprenticeship—this art of helping one's pupils to attain unto the image of Christ. The sculptor who ceases to learn his art ceases to live; the teacher who ceases to learn his art ceases to live. Yet I do not mean to say that the art of molding clay or chiselling marble is wholly like the art of molding character.[1] The order of development is not altogether the same. For instance, the artist must first fall in love with his art, while the teacher must first fall in love with his pattern. The artist may have many patterns in a lifetime; the teacher will have but one.

Your first business then is with the pattern that has been given you—Jesus Christ. If you are to mold your pupils into the image of Christ you must first become thoroughly acquainted with that image. You must know Christ. In other words, you must have a clear, strong, definite vision of the image which you are expected to copy. If an artist tries to mold an image that is yet but imperfectly formed in his mind

See page 14.

he will fail. The success of his work depends largely upon the distinctness of his vision. First, then, you want a clearly defined vision of Christ. You want to see Him not only as the Divine One, but as the perfect man. You want to know Him not only as a personal Saviour, but as a personal friend.

Let me be perfectly frank about this matter. If you do not know Christ you are not going to do anything worth while. I am not exaggerating. The idea that a man or woman can teach a Sunday-school class as it is intended to be taught, simply because he or she is intelligent, or talented, or has had a course in pedagogy, is sheer nonsense. I do not care how intelligent or talented an artist may be; he may know everything that is knowable; he may be a veritable wizard with his fingers; but as a rule if he tries to mold or carve an image that has not become clearly defined before him—if he tries to mold something which is as yet confused in his mind's eye—he will fail. I am aware that this illustration is very imperfect, for the teacher is not limited in this matter as narrowly as the artist, but generally speaking it is true that nothing else will avail if there is no clearness of vision. The only thing for an artist to do when his vision is indistinct is to drop his chisel or brush and look after the image that is forming in his mind. And as a rule

the only thing for a teacher to do, who has attempted to teach his pupils while the image of Christ is as yet indistinct before him, is to drop everything and look after the image that has been set before him.

Take your Bible and lock yourself in your room. Forget that you are a teacher. Forget that there are pupils waiting to be taught. Open your Bible at Matthew. Read Matthew to-day—not a chapter, but the whole book; read Mark to-morrow and Luke the third day and John the day after. Go back to Matthew again and read these Gospels over and over again until you have been thoroughly saturated with them. Don't study them; don't analyze them; read them. Absorb them. Drink them in. You don't want to get at the meaning of this or that point; you want to take in the whole picture. By and by you will have the vision of Christ in these Gospels like that of the yet imperfectly restored blind man who could see men only as trees walking. But read on, and while you read let your heart cry out to God: "Lord, show me Thy Son."

Open your heart to God about this matter. Tell Him that you want to know Christ—not that you may teach your pupils about Him but that you may receive Him; that you may be one with Him; that you may breathe His spirit; that you may be like Him. Keep your

heart wide open before Christ—ready to receive every word He speaks; ready to do whatever He may require. Read and pray and read again. Then sit still before Him. Sit still until you can hear your heart beat, and then quiet your heart. Be still before God and wait. Wait before Him in an attitude of perfect surrender to Him. Wait until every thought of your own passes out of your mind, and every disturbing sound is lost in the distance, and you sit with open and empty heart and mind before Him. One of these days, while you are thus waiting, there will come into your inmost being such a sense of the reality and presence of the personal Christ—such a vision of Him who is fairest among ten thousand, that your heart will hardly be able to contain itself, and you will turn to your pupils thrilled with that fine frenzy which the artist feels when, all on fire with the vision before him, he seizes his lump of clay and begins to mold.

XXVI

SEEDS TO SOW

THERE are two ways to get rid of grass. One is to let it alone until it grows up, and then pull it up by the roots. It is an ancient method that is still held in much favour where laziness is king. The other is to get ahead of it—to get there first with something better. The soil is no respecter of persons. It's first come, first serve. If the grass gets there first, it will have the right of way. If your wheat gets there first, it will have the right of way. He was a wise warrior who said that the way to win a battle is to get there first with the most men. There is every advantage to the man who occupies the ground first in every battle of life, whether he is fighting grass, or soldiers, or sin.

Are you getting there first? Are you on the ground with plenty of good seed ahead of the enemy? Are you waiting for evil to sprout up and grow, intending to pull it up by the roots by and by, or are you hastening to get rid of it before it comes? What about the hearts of your pupils? Are you trying to get there first?

Are you already on the ground with a good crop planted, or are you simply watching and waiting for little sprouts of evil to spring up, that you may pull them up by the roots? Are you a good, live farmer in the Lord's service? Are you a hearty hater of grass?

Take, for example, the seeds of doubt which the world, the flesh and the devil combine to sow in the heart of every young man the moment he begins to sprout a mustache. You know that in the course of human events that boy in your class is going to sprout a mustache, and you know that to-day the ground of his heart is practically unoccupied. You know that the world, the flesh and the devil have their eyes on it, and that as sure as the sun shines they will be on hand when the time comes to take possession. They are standing ready now with bushels and bushels of seeds of doubt and skepticism and unbelief—call them what you will—ready to scatter them broadcast the moment the word is given. And to-day you have that boy in charge. He is not disposed to doubt now, and you have the first chance. What are you doing about it? Are you waiting quietly to see the sprouts of doubt shoot up so that you can pull them up by the roots, or are you on the ground busily sowing down the soil with seeds that will forever keep doubt from getting a hold? If you are going

to win this battle, should you not be on the ground with the most seed first?

It is sheer nonsense, this idea that a young man must become an unbeliever before he can ever become an intelligent believer. It may be safe to say of a young man that he is likely to pass through certain stages of development, in which he will find it easy to doubt and hard to believe; but God did not so plan this world that any man in his making should be compelled at any time to doubt his Maker. A young man may be preserved from the experience of unbelief just as he may be saved from sowing his wild oats.

What kind of seed do we need to sow in order to occupy the heart ahead of unbelief? I answer, first, the fundamental truths of our religion; second, certain practical, every-day truths or facts which effectually answer all the arguments that can be brought against our religion. Let me mention two of these every-day facts which we need to sow in the heart of every boy—and every girl, for that matter—with whom we come in contact:

The first is that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It makes no difference what the cook or the critic may say about the pudding, the proof of it is in the eating. That is final. The cook may bring a car-load of facts to prove that the pudding was properly made, and the

critic may offer a car-load of theories to prove that it was not, but the proof of it is still in the eating. So it makes no difference what men may say about our religion: the proof of it is in the eating. What does it do for the man who receives it, devours it, appropriates it, absorbs it? The logic is irresistible: if our religion makes a man more godlike, it is of God, and all the theories and all the alleged facts that men may pile up against it are not worth a sou. The question is, does it make men more godly? What has it done for the world? What has it done for intelligent men and women? What has it done even for men who do not accept it, but whose lives have notwithstanding come under its influence? What has it done for your best friend? What has it done for your mother? Said a man, "I don't know much about religion—I am no theologian—but I know my mother, and I know that the religion that can make such a mother is good enough for me."

Another seed to sow in the mind of a growing boy or a girl is the truth that the ability to speak with authority about one thing is no evidence of a man's ability to speak with authority about another. A young man is not at college a month before some young fellow comes to him and whispers, "Why is it that so many of our great scholars don't believe in

the Christian religion?" And instantly the young man falls down in a heap. He does not stop to inquire whether it is true or whether, if true, it has any significance; he simply falls in a heap. If a man with as big a brain as Professor Sophocles cannot see anything in religion, then surely there can be nothing in it. But the fact that a man has a big brain proves nothing except that he has a big brain. He may be very wise or he may be otherwise. He may know everything worth knowing in one sphere of life and he may know nothing worth knowing in any other sphere of life. A backwoodsman from the mountains walks into a chemical laboratory. The moment he shuts the door behind him he is in a new world, but he does not see it. He has nothing with which to grasp it. So far as he is concerned, the world of chemistry does not exist. Nothing exists but a lot of vile-smelling crucibles. That man can speak with authority on mountain corn and mountain bears, but not about chemistry. An old bachelor, who has lived fifty years by himself, spends a day in a home illumined with love. His mother died when he was a baby, and he grew up in an orphanage. He learned to spell love when a little child, and he has never spelled it since. He can no more comprehend the world of love than a backwoodsman can comprehend the world of chemistry. A young man

just out of college consecrates himself for life on the altar of material science. He gives his days and nights to the study of matter. He has no thought for anything else. As time runs on he loses all taste for everything else, all capacity for enjoying everything else. At fifty he has not read a poem in thirty years, and he tells you it is all bosh. He has not heard an opera or an oratorio in thirty years, and music is all bosh. He has never had time to fall in love, and love is all bosh. He is a stranger to the world of art, the world of the affections, the world of sentiment. In his blind study of matter he has given no thought to spirit or that which is spiritual. He has never tried to reach out after God in prayer. He has remained a stranger to all the higher impulses that come to a man in the stillness of the twilight. That man can speak with authority about anything in the world of science, but who will take him seriously in the world of art, or the world of love? It was such a man who said to a man friend who had been crushed by the loss of his wife: "Pshaw, man, what are you crying about? The world is full of women just as good as she was." Put this thought in the mind of your boy. If we do not take what this man says seriously about the world of art, or the world of love, because we know that he knows nothing about it, why should we take him seriously

when he presumes to speak with authority about the spiritual world, of which he is equally ignorant? I hardly know anything more pitiful than Darwin's confession, made after he had passed the prime of life. He tells us that he had lost all taste for music, all taste for poetry, all taste for the plastic arts, all taste for everything beautiful except natural scenery. He had devoted himself so earnestly and exclusively to the one sphere in which he had chosen to live that all other spheres had become foreign to him. He had retained his taste for natural scenery only because his investigations of nature had kept him in touch with natural scenery. The pitiful thing about it is that Darwin could see that he had lost his ability to grasp these things simply because he had spent his life apart from them, and yet it never occurred to him that his refusal to believe in the spiritual world was due to his inability to grasp it, and his inability to grasp it was due to the fact that he had spent his life entirely apart from it. The fact that a man who has devoted his life to the material world cannot see anything in the spiritual world does not prove that there is no spiritual world any more than the fact that an old bachelor cannot see the world of love proves that there is no world of love.

XXVII

SOME CLASS PROBLEMS

SOME teachers attempt to bring a backward pupil forward by pushing him to the front. This is rarely successful and is sometimes fatal. Doubtless there are many backward pupils who are backward through timidity and no doubt they ought to be helped over their timidity; but it is not wise to help a child over his timidity by jerking him over it. Let the backward pupil stay in the background—for a while, anyway. Ask him very few questions at first and let them be simple and easy. Do not call attention to him in any way and do not ask him a question that is likely to excite the interest of others. Do not require him to say or do anything that will rivet all eyes upon him. In a word, don't try to jerk him forward. Draw him forward gently and be content if he does not pull back from you. If he is backward from stupidity talk with him privately about some little thing you would like to have him do. Select an aim for him—a goal you would like to have him reach. When he lags behind point to it and when he reaches it, as in the course of time he will if

you are faithful, do not forget to rejoice with him.

2. What would I do to draw out a timid pupil? There are several things I would not do. I would not do anything to call the attention of the class to him. I would not let him know that I was conscious of his timidity, nor would I allow the pupils to show that they were conscious of it. I would never ask him a question at the very beginning of the lesson. I would never ask him a difficult question. Finally, I would not be too anxious to draw him out. About the best thing one can do to draw out a timid pupil is to be patient and wait. Ask him a simple question now and then in a very casual way and pass on. Give him some little thing to do. It is easier for a timid child to do a dozen things than to say one thing.

3. "What would you do with a smart pupil who insists upon answering all the questions?" Chloroform him. Tell him privately that you are more anxious to get answers from those who do not know the lesson well than from those who do. If he persists in answering ask him in quick succession several questions which you know he cannot answer. Bear in mind, however, that the smart pupil would not have a chance to display his smartness overmuch if you would avoid asking questions of the class as a whole. This may be done oc-

casionally but as a rule pupils should be questioned individually. This of course does not apply to adult classes.

4. Why are my pupils disposed to antagonize me? Why do they always take the opposite side? Is it simply because they dearly love an argument, or is there something in what I say or in my manner or tone of voice that always rubs them the wrong way? Have I a way of stoutly maintaining my side of a question so that my pupils are tempted to argue with me? If I find that the trouble is with myself—in my speech or spirit or general make-up—I will of course take myself in hand instead of my class. If on the other hand I find that it is due to an inordinate fondness of my pupils for argument I will still take myself in hand. I will guard against saying things that will tempt them into a discussion, and when I find my pupils about to take sides against me I will quietly switch off on something else.

5. "What would you do with a child who has a way of turning up her nose at every sign of poverty that appears in the clothing of her classmates?" I don't know. The trouble is it comes from either a lack of sense which you cannot help, or a lack of home training which most of us don't know how to help. I should say, seek an opportunity *outside* of the class to teach

her those things which her mother ought to have taught. If you cannot do this you can only pity and pray and be patient, while seeking to overcome the effect of her sneers upon her classmates by teaching them (without any reference to the sneering pupil) that greatness and goodness are matters of character, not of clothes.

6. I do not believe in offering prizes of any sort. I believe in offering rewards, and these rewards should be of the same character as those which one is apt to win in later life if one is faithful. In other words, our rewards should be of the nature of honours and promotions. The greatest rewards we get in this life are (1) recognition for diligence and faithfulness and (2) opportunities to be more faithful and more diligent. Give a pupil a certificate of honour for faithfulness and when he has accomplished a certain amount of work promote him. These are rewards that mean something, that teach something, and that abide. Your cheap jewelry and other flimsy gewgaws given as prizes mean nothing, teach nothing and do not abide.

7. It is easy to fall into the habit of doing too much for one's pupils. Some pupils get too much teaching; some too much preaching; some too much coaxing; some too much mothering. There are teachers who are so fussy and fidgety that they worry their children into a fever. It is never safe to neglect one's pupils,

but it is well sometimes to exercise a little wholesome letting alone.

8. "What would you do with a stranger who drops into your class and takes a seat without an invitation?" I would give him a most cordial greeting, ask his name, give him mine, introduce him to each member of the class, hand him a Bible, tell him what point we have reached in the lesson, and for the rest of the hour treat him as far as possible as one of the class. You may say that this will break into your lesson, and perhaps it will; but it will give you an excellent opportunity to teach your pupils a lesson in Christian courtesy, and you cannot afford to let such an opportunity slip by you.

9. You have found that you can make no progress in teaching without an aim and you have therefore set up a goal before you as a magnet to draw you forward. You have learned the power of this magnet and you would not be without it for the world. The moment you reach your goal you propose to set up another. Now why not provide for your pupils as you have provided for yourself? They can make no progress without an aim any more than you can, and they are not likely to decide what to aim at without your help. Why not set up a definite goal for them as a magnet to draw them forward? Plan your work with this end in view, and tell them your

plan. Let them know what you want them to reach by a given time. See that their eyes are fixed on the goal at which they are to aim and then see that they do not lose sight of it.

10. Ignore the impertinent fussy sort of a boy who is always interrupting you in the lesson. You will no more break him of his ugly habit by noticing him than you can break a child of the habit of calling you from another part of the house by answering him.

11. As for the boy who is always playing "tricks" in the class, I should pay little attention to his conduct during the lesson hour, but I would make an opportunity to see him alone during the week and have a frank talk with him. I would try to show him that while he did not intend to do wrong he was doing a great deal of harm—so much harm that I had found it necessary to come to him about it. If I could get an expression of regret from him and a promise to do so no more, I would make him feel that I had confidence in his word. I would then see his mother and try to secure her coöperation. If the boy continued to offend in spite of my remonstrances I would tell him plainly that he could no longer remain in my class, and I would then turn him over to the superintendent.

12. Of course it is difficult to keep up the interest of the class in summer, but you will

find it a great deal more difficult if you grumble over it. The wise teacher treats the listlessness of summer just as he does its heat. The best way to get through a hot summer is to accept the fact that summers are hot and to refuse to think of the heat. And so the best way for a teacher to get through a summer is to accept the fact that everybody is more or less listless in summer and then absolutely refuse to think about it. No wise teacher ever watches his pupils to see how indifferent they are; he knows they will appear more indifferent than ever. And he never dares to talk of their indifference, much less complain about it. I never knew the interest of a pupil to be awakened by being lectured about his indifference.

13. "Don't you think it unwise to promote a class to a higher grade and leave the teacher behind when the pupils insist on staying with him?" I have never found this so serious a matter as it is usually assumed to be. I have known pupils to be up in arms about giving up their teacher when as a matter of fact they did not care a fig. And I have known a superintendent to be in mortal fear that a class would go to pieces if he took the teacher away when the pupils were secretly delighted at the thought of a change. As a rule these matters adjust themselves easily after a week or two. Of course there are exceptions.

14. Fully four-fifths of all the work that is done to win the hearts of the pupils in the Sunday-school is done in the primary department. Possibly the primary department is overdoing it. Certainly it is if the rest of the school proposes to do nothing. The contrast between the two is too great. The primary department is a warm, cozy nest; the main school, to the child coming out of this nest, is a frozen world. In the primary department he has all sorts of attentions paid him—perhaps too many—now he must shift for himself. His primary teacher knew all about him—knew his mamma and his papa, and his sisters and how many kittens he had, and his birthday—and always came to see him or sent him a card when his birthday came. The new teacher speaks very kindly to him, asks him a few questions out of the quarterly, and the thing is done. And she never knows anything about his mamma, and his papa; she never knows anything about his kittens; she never so much as heard that he has a birthday. It is time we were taking hold of this problem. We must learn to take the children where the primary department leaves them. The ten-year-old child is just as much in need of attention as the six-year-old child, and the fifteen-year-old child is just as much in need of attention as the ten-year-old child. We never grow too old to

need the affectionate interest of those who are teaching us. We want our teachers to know about us; we want them to remember our birthdays. There is no more reason why a forty-year-old pupil in the Sunday-school should not be remembered on his birthday than the four-year-old pupil.

15. Children expect something on Christmas from those who love them. If a pupil gets something from you when he expected nothing he concludes that you love him more than he thought you did. If he gets nothing, when he expected something, he is apt to conclude that you do not love him at all. Moreover, if you try to remember all who are dear to you, and fail to send anything to your pupils you will find it difficult to think of them as belonging to the inner circle of loved ones. It is not wise to send pupils expensive presents, but I would send them something—a little card, or, if you can, a large art card to hang on the wall, which will cause them to think of you and of the Sunday-school many times through the year.

16. I would keep the absent pupil's name on my list just so long as there remained the slightest chance of getting him back again. The moment you drop him from your list you give him up, and a pupil should never be given up until he is dead, or has left the community, or gone to some other school.

17. If you are not strong enough to manage your class do not confess it to your pupils by fretting over them. The smallest child understands that people fret only because they can't. The wise teacher shows his strong points and keeps his weak ones to himself.

18. As a rule a teacher should not have a heart-to-heart talk with a pupil in the presence of others, but he ought to seek opportunities to have such talks in private.

XXVIII

REACHING THE PUPILS DURING THE WEEK

I DO not believe that it is the business of the teacher to ring door-bells any more than I believe it is the business of the pastor. "Pop" calls may do some good, but as a rule they consume more time than they are worth. Pastors are finding out that they can accomplish more in one visit of half an hour or an hour than in half a dozen ten-minute calls. The teacher should devote what time he can spare to a few visits that will be remembered rather than fritter it away in many calls that will be forgotten. Most of us feel that we have little time to spare but there are at least two occasions when the teacher *must* visit a pupil, whether he can spare the time or not—once when he is sick and the other when death enters his home.

Why not have a committee to visit the sick? I answer: A Sunday-school rarely makes a bigger blunder than when it appoints a committee to visit the sick. Visiting a sick teacher is the superintendent's business, and visiting a sick pupil is the teacher's business, and a committee can no more take the place of either than it can

take the place of a mother whose business it is to visit her sick son. What would you think of your mother if she should stay away from you when you were sick and satisfy her conscience with the reflection that a committee had been appointed to visit you? When a sick committee visits a child in the place of his teacher one thing is sure to happen. It is bound to happen. "Miss Jones came to see me when I was sick but my teacher she never comes. I want Miss Jones for my teacher." The right of a teacher to look after his sick pupils is a divine right, and let no school ever interfere with it. If a teacher fails to visit a sick pupil that is another matter. He should be interfered with. He should be interfered with long enough to get his resignation. If a teacher is sick himself let him send his sick pupil a message by a friend. But don't let the friend go as a committee.

"Is it always necessary to visit the home of a pupil in the case of a death in the family?" Yes. "Suppose one doesn't know the family?" I am sorry for the teacher who has never visited the homes of the pupils. No wonder he feels awkward at such a time and does not know what to do. But whether I knew the family or not I would call at once, and if it was not convenient to see my pupil I would leave my card for him as well as the family.

And a day or two afterwards I would write him a letter or, if I found this too difficult, I would send him a bereavement card containing a comforting sentiment, and with a word of sympathy and my name written on the back.

"How often should one write letters to one's pupils?"

You don't want to write often enough to make your letters commonplace to your pupils. Ordinarily three or four times a year will do. Of course much depends upon the opportunities that will arise. If nothing unusual occurs in the life of a pupil you may content yourself with a letter accompanying a card at Christmas, at Easter, and before Children's Day or Rally Day, or both. But special opportunities are going to arise. Your pupil is going to have a birthday which you must not ignore under any circumstances. You can at least send an appropriate card with your best wishes on the back. And one day death will enter his home and of course you will use this opportunity for a tender missive. And perhaps the first Sunday in next month will be the anniversary of his joining the church. That will give you an excellent opportunity, especially if he has need to be reminded as he is likely to be now and then that he is really a member of the church.

"Is there any special advantage in writing letters to pupils?"

Do you remember what a letter meant to you when you were a child—a letter that bore your name and a stamp and actually came through the mail? Did it not make you happy for a whole day? And did you not prize it as if it were worth far more than its weight in gold? And did you not read it over and over again and remember every word of it? And when your teacher who hated letter-writing stopped you just after Sunday-school to say something to you which she might have written in a letter did it make a great impression upon you? Did you repeat it over and over on your way home and hug her words to your heart as a precious treasure? Did it make any impression upon you at all? Didn't you forget it before you reached home?

One thing more. Don't use a postal in writing to a child. Not if you can get together enough money to buy a two-cent stamp. And the reason is simple. One thing that makes a letter so precious to a child is its privacy. Children dearly love to have secrets. To have a letter from one's own teacher that no eyes have looked upon except the teacher's and the child's—that is bliss supreme. Let your pupils taste this bliss. Don't spoil it all by putting it on a postal that everybody can read—and will read before the pupil gets it.

XXIX

HELPING THE PUPILS WITH EVERY-DAY PROBLEMS

OUR lessons in the course of a year or two shed light on almost every problem of life. Are we making the most of this light? Take, for example, the money question. What are we teaching our children about money? Half the pupils in the Sunday-school have never been taught anything about money except the duty of putting a penny in the plate when it is handed around. And they hear this every Sunday. Has the Bible no light on the great moral questions relating to money? Shall we let our pupils go out into the world utterly ignorant of the great principles which govern honourable men in the handling of money? Thousands of young men and women are going out into life with no higher thought than to make money. Nobody has ever suggested to them a higher thought. Shall we not at least tell them that no true man was ever content to work for money alone?—that there is something in the heart of every true man that revolts against making money for its own sake?—that the only way in which

a manly man can be content to make money is to do some good while he is making it, and to do good with it when he has made it?

Then there is the problem of suffering. A child sees no good in suffering and therefore few children suffer heroically. That is not so bad, but it is pitiful when children grow up to manhood without having learned how to suffer and bring their childish whining with them. Perhaps half of the failures of life come from failing to get a right attitude towards pain on the threshold of life. We start out running from suffering. There is but one thing we can run from without becoming cowardly and that is sin. If we get in the habit of running from everything that is painful, hard, bitter, trying, unpleasant, we will lose what courage we started with and we will lose all the strength and development that come from endurance. In other words, we will never become real men: we will be soft-fleshed, muscleless cry-babies all our days. Nothing is easier than to teach a child the mission of suffering in life. Show him a baby. What is sweeter than a baby? But suppose Baby never stretched its little arms and legs, never made an effort to walk, never felt cold or heat but just stayed in its warm cradle and cooed the days away. What would you think of Baby ten years from to-day—a great, big, gross lump of muscleless

flesh with no strength for anything? Look at those roses! Last year they made a poor show, but this spring mother cut the bush mercilessly almost to the ground. It seemed such a cruel thing to do, but look at those roses! And those big chrysanthemums you had last fall—big as your two hands—came from a bush that a year or two ago grew little ugly flowers no bigger than buttons. And mother did it by pinching off nearly all the buds on the bush!

XXX

HOW TO INCREASE THE ATTENDANCE

IT makes little difference what method a housewife uses to get the family to dinner —or whether she uses any method at all— if it is known that she always provides a good dinner. So it makes little difference what methods are used to get children to attend Sunday-school if it is known that those who do go get something worth going for. Some of us are too much concerned about getting the children to come, and too little concerned about what we should do for them when they do come.

I believe in offering rewards for faithfulness, but I do not believe in games of chance, or in encouraging a child to hope to get something for nothing in this life. If you can make an offer for attendance that will be a reward for faithfulness pure and simple, well and good; but I doubt if you can do it. Most of our contests for prizes are mere games of chance. Here is a little child who would have been present every Sunday but for hindrances over which he had no control. To him it is a game of chance. Here is another child who was

present every Sunday because his mother saw to it that he was present. This child gets something for nothing. Moreover he gets a reward which does not belong to him at all but to his mother. One child misses the prize because of sickness. Another gets it because of his health. If this sort of thing is repeated often both are likely to grow up with the idea that accidental success is the rule rather than the exception of life.

Membership contests are like all other races —exhausting and sometimes perilous. I have known Sunday-schools to come out of them so far spent that they were never able to recuperate. About the only good thing to be said of a contest is that what it does it does quickly. If you absolutely must double your attendance within the next month or two I would have a membership contest. But if you want to increase your membership permanently you must use other methods. A membership contest is a big spasm, and the life of a spasm is short. If after doubling your attendance by a membership contest you will promptly introduce other methods you may be able to keep it up to high-water mark. Otherwise it is likely to decline to the point from where it was at the beginning. The best method of securing a large permanent increase is a method that lasts the year round. Have an associate superintendent whose busi-

ness it shall be to look after the attendance. Give him a standing committee with a secretary. The committee should be very large and should be composed only of agreeable persons who know how to make a pleasant impression when visiting strangers. Divide the committee into twos. They should always go on their mission as did the seventy whom Jesus appointed—two by two. Let the associate superintendent district the town or community, and appoint in each neighbourhood a child (not an adult) whose business it shall be to look out for all newcomers in his neighbourhood and if they have no fixed Sunday-school homes report the fact at once by 'phone or postal or in person to the associate superintendent or secretary. The children thus appointed should be known as the "lookout committee." I would not appoint an adult on this committee for the simple reason that a child will learn more about a new neighbour in three hours than an adult will learn in three weeks. Moreover, he will enjoy the honour and take an interest in the work. The secretary should keep an account of all names thus reported and of the committees appointed to look after each person. Suppose the name of a young man is reported. Two young men notified by the secretary or associate superintendent should call to see this young man early in the week. Another couple

should call and repeat the invitation towards the end of the week. If he does not appear at Sunday-school the following Sunday two young men should see him on Monday, two more on Wednesday and two more on Saturday. The young man who does not surrender at the end of the second week should be visited every day of the following week—each time, if possible, by a different committee. If he still holds out do not set him down as a hopeless apostate. He may surrender the next week. Little tots should be visited by ladies, boys by boys and young men, girls by girls and young ladies. This method not only increases the attendance but it gives more than half of the teachers and pupils something to do, and wonderfully quickens the zeal and interest of the whole school. Other methods may bring quicker results but no other method ever devised has brought better results.

XXXI

HOW TO ORGANIZE A BIBLE CLASS

NEXT to a good teacher the most important thing, it seems to me, for a Bible class is a thorough organization. You are not going to produce the class spirit—you are not going to cultivate the tie that binds—without organization. You should elect at the beginning a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, an executive committee and a teacher. I would have the executive committee provide, among other things, for social meetings of the class, which should be held very often. It is important for the class to choose some missionary or benevolent object to look after. A class badge, also, is a good thing. One of the best features that can be introduced, however, is the life membership plan. The great Vaughn Bible Class, of Washington City, adopted this plan many years ago and its members are now scattered all over the world. A young man joins the class for life. If he goes to the other side of the globe he is still a member and he is never lost sight of.

But a big Bible class is in danger of being wrecked unless you have an organization that

reaches every man in it. Let me give you a plan. Divide the community into several districts, so that each district will contain from eight to twelve members of your class. Elect a chairman and a vice-chairman in each district. Let each chairman call his members in his district together and organize them into a division. The chairman in the first district will organize Division No. 1; the chairman in the second Division No. 2, and so on. It is not necessary to have any officers except the chairman and vice-chairman; the work is to be done mainly by committees. The division itself should be a committee on membership. There should be an absentee committee, composed of two or three members; a newcomers' committee, to look after the young men who have just moved into the neighbourhood; a committee to look after the sick and unfortunate; a committee to aid members out of employment in securing positions; and perhaps one or two other committees. Arrange the committees so that every member of a division will be a member of one other committee besides the membership committee. The chairman should call up his members over the 'phone or see them in person or write to them once a week, and have them give him the names of all the men in the district who are not connected with any Bible class, the names of all newcomers and the names of any who are

sick or out of employment or in trouble of any sort. The chairman will turn over these names to the proper committees and will call up the chairmen of these committees occasionally to see that they are doing their work. As chairman of the membership committee, he will, of course, divide up the names of all prospective members among the members of the division. In sending an invitation to a man to join the class, it is best to send by a committee of two. If they do not succeed in getting him, send another committee, and another, and another. He should not be allowed to go in peace until he either joins or leaves the neighbourhood. When a division grows to a membership of fifteen the district should be divided and two divisions organized in the place of the old one. The chairman of the several divisions, together with the general officers of the class, should compose the general executive committee. The executive committee should be divided into several sub-committees corresponding to the division committees, and when the division committees are unable for any reason to attend to any duty that may be assigned to them, the matter should be turned over to the general sub-committees. For instance, if the employment committee should be unable to secure a position for a member who is out of employment, the fact should be reported to the general

employment sub-committee, which may enlist the services of the entire class in behalf of the unemployed member. In addition to the usual general officers of the class, there should be an absentee secretary. The absentee secretary should forward to the chairman of each division every Monday the names of the members of his division who were absent on Sunday. The division chairman will turn these names over to the chairman of his absentee committee, and at the end of the week call up the absentee chairman and find out if his committee has visited or communicated with the absentees. Every Sunday morning after the study of the lesson the chairman of each division (or in his absence the vice-chairman) should report the names of all new members secured by his division, and also the names of any sick members in his district. Once a month the secretary should report to the class the name of the division making the best report in attendance, and the division reporting the largest number of new members. This plan has many apparent advantages. It not only keeps account of the members, so that no one can be lost sight of, but it gives every member something to do, and also keeps account of all who ought to be members.

XXXII

THE WAY OF A CHILD

I SUPPOSE that the hardest thing you will ever have to do as a teacher will be to keep from forgetting that you are teaching children. Not grown people who know what you know, nor cooing babies who know nothing at all, nor marvels of wisdom, nor drivelling idiots, but just plain unadulterated children.

It is mainly because the average teacher has such a poor memory at this point that he is only an average teacher—that is, a very poor teacher. It goes without saying that no one ever teaches successfully who does not know his pupils, but many of us do not realize just what this means. We think it means that we must know that this pupil is named John and that pupil Henry; that John has a father who is a drunkard, and that Henry has a temper that must be crucified—and so on. This is all very well and indeed it is all very necessary. But these are not the things we need to remember most of all. The things that we need to remember most of all are not the things that are peculiar to

John or Henry, but the things that are common to all children.

For instance, there is the child's way of looking at things. The average teacher talks about a thing as if his pupil was looking over his shoulder and seeing things just as he sees them. As a matter of fact the point of view of a child is almost never the point of view of his teacher. It is of the utmost importance that you should know the point of view of your pupil and that you should take his views into account. You must respect his opinions. It is a serious thing to ignore a child's way of looking at things. It is often a fatal thing. It is better that a millstone should be hanged about the teacher's neck and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea than that he should offend one of these little ones by running roughshod over his views trying to force his own views into their place.

The biggest thing about a healthy child is his appetite. He is always wanting to be fed. And he craves food for his mind and his heart just as intensely as he craves it for his body. Your five-year-old is as hungry for a good story read out of a book as he is for the big red apple he has just discovered in the pantry. And he is as hungry for mother's loving attentions as he is for the biggest slice of cake on the table. Wherever he goes he wants to be fed, and if

you send him where he gets nothing he will not willingly go again. That is why some of the children you know have to be pushed off to Sunday-school every Sunday morning. They have been to Sunday-school and they have not been fed, and they don't want to go again. They feel as if they have been cheated. It is a mistake to suppose that some children do not want to learn. Some children may not want to learn some things you may want to teach them, but they want to learn all the same. And when they come back from Sunday-school without having had the cravings of their minds satisfied they are in great disgust. "What's the use of going to that old Sunday-school? They don't teach a fellow anything." "But don't they teach you the golden text?" "Yes, but that's all they do." There is no meat in the golden text for the child mind. Of course, it must be taught but you can starve a child to death feeding him on golden texts. What his mind craves is knowledge—not principles, or theories, or rules. He wants facts, and while he likes them put up in story form he will take them just so if you give them to him that way. Almost any bit of knowledge will interest a child, and if you give him a good many facts they will satisfy his craving—for a while. Are you feeding the children that come to your Sunday-school? If your pupil should visit you at your home

about the first thing you would do would be to get something nice for him to eat. Will you allow him to come to your class Sunday after Sunday and never give him anything to satisfy the cravings of his mind, or the deeper cravings of his heart?

We are often overwhelmed by the thought that our children are imitating our ways. But children do not stop with imitation; they use our ways as premises to reason out new ways for themselves. That is, what we say or do not only suggests to a child the saying or doing of the same thing, but it frequently suggests to him the saying or doing of something else also. He not only draws on our ideas, but he is continually reasoning out of them ideas of his own. A neighbour of ours was speaking the other day of a servant who had turned out badly. "Why, papa," interrupted the youngest hopeful of the house—"why, papa, she's as dishonest as the moon." "Where did you get that idea, my son?" "Well," said the youngest, "I'd like to know if you didn't say one day that that man what came here was as honest as the sun."

Let me add some practical hints:

1. A child will do almost anything for you with a good grace except wait. It is a hard thing to keep his little body still; it is almost impossible to hold his little mind. When the

superintendent fingers the leaves to find a song, or the teacher spends two minutes looking up a reference, one thing inevitably happens: all the little minds go rushing off like frisky colts to some fine field of fancy, and ten to one, half of them will not be caught and brought back before the school is over. Don't let loose the little colts for a moment, not even to get out your spectacles. Get your songs, your references, your announcements ready beforehand, and when you open your school or begin your lesson start off in a lively trot and keep going. It is the only way to keep little colts or little Sunday-school scholars in line.

2. Figures of speech should never be used in talking to little children, unless they are explained, for the simple reason that the mind of a little child cannot grasp the idea of figurative language. A little child takes things literally or not at all. Try this sentence on the first child you meet: "That man's heart is all right though his head may be wrong." That is simple enough, to be sure, to you and me, but you will not find one tot in a thousand who can guess at its meaning. There are so many figures of speech in the Bible that it is impossible for the teacher to carry his pupils very far without using them; but they should be introduced gradually, and carefully explained over and over again.

3. If three-fourths of the scholars were grown people you would think it very absurd to select such songs as "I washed my hands this morning." Why should it not be just as absurd when three-fourths of the scholars are children to be always singing such dirges as "Peace, Perfect Peace"? It is not necessary that the songs should be boisterous. Now and then the children will like something sweet and low. But a Sunday-school song should never be a dirge. No healthy child ever enjoyed the music at a funeral.

4. As a rule children do not handle the Bible irreverently until the example is set for them by older persons. Sometimes it is set by their teacher. I was not surprised the other day to see a boy in Sunday-school throw his Bible across the class, when I found that the teacher, who happened to have a low chair, was sitting on her own copy of the Word of God.

5. I would not often tell a child that this or that is his duty, and then proceed to exhort him to do it. I would rather, if I could, tell him a story of something that would lead him to discover the duty for himself and that would inspire him with the desire to do it. A child will often perform a duty which he has discovered for himself, when it is almost impossible to get him to do the duty which you have pointed out to him.

6. Some flowers bloom in a few months; some take a year; one, they say, takes a century. Some bloom in the light, some only in the night. So with the boys and girls in our classes. Some blossom out so quickly you look upon them wide-eyed with wonder; some are so slow you can hardly see that they are developing at all; and there is one in the class you have worked with and prayed over so long, it looks like it will take a century. And some are not going to blossom out, maybe, until a great darkness comes down upon their lives and brings out the stars. Let us be patient.

XXXIII

ABOUT BOYS

YOU can read a little child like a book. He is so candid, so artless, so perfectly transparent. But you never make a bigger mistake than when you imagine that you can read a big child like a book. Most of us cannot read him at all. It is about as hard for some folks to tell what is inside of a fourteen-year-old boy as it is to decipher the hieroglyphics on Cleopatra's needle. A big boy never advertises; he hides. If he thinks of doing an heroic thing it makes him blush—he is so afraid somebody will find it out. If you suspect the good that is in him he will throw you off the track by blurting out something unspeakably foolish or shocking. He has a horror of the goody-goody. He'd rather be knocked down and sat upon by a mere kid than to have you pat him on the head and call him a good boy. (In the name of all that's good, kind reader, don't pat a fourteen-year-old boy on the head.) And he'd rather lie down and die this minute than have a body speak of him as "a comfort to his mother." And yet if you should one day by some strange fortune succeed

in finding your way deep down into the heart of that boy you would very likely find that he really wants to be a good boy and a comfort to his mother. The only way to read a boy is to get close to him. And the only way to get close to him is to approach him as a companion. And the only way to approach him as a companion is to resurrect your own boyhood in your own heart. No man can reach the heart of a boy who cannot recall the feelings of his own boyhood. But how about a woman? I don't know. It is only now and then that you will find a woman who can get close to the heart of a fourteen-year-old boy. And when you find her you will probably find a mischievous-eyed mother who romped with fourteen-year-old boys when she was twelve, and who was known to her dismayed maiden aunts as a horrid tomboy.

No doubt there are bad boys just as there are bad men; and I suppose if a census were taken we should find about as many of one as of the other. The main difference seems to be that the average boy conceals his good points, while the average man conceals his bad ones. When a small boy jumped into the river the other day and rescued a drowning man, he blushed at the applause of the spectators and ran home as fast as his little legs could take him. And when he got home he didn't mention

it. A man would have hastened to get his photograph and family history ready for the evening papers. Men turn the rough side in; boys turn the rough side out. Men are practiced in the art of concealing their infirmities —infirmities of temper, speech, appetite. A boy blurts out his worst feelings; lets out his ugliest words, whistling hot from the boiler; and if he has the appetite of a pig everybody knows it. Nobody but a man's wife knows a man's appetite.

A man is adjudged innocent until he is proved guilty. That is his privilege. A boy is adjudged guilty until he is proved innocent. That is his fate. Give the average boy a square deal and a fair chance along with the average man and I shouldn't wonder if he came out two laps ahead any day.

Not that boys are especially good. No, no. But men are not especially good either. I am simply pleading for a square deal. We don't play fair with our boys.

Give a dog a bad name and you might as well kill him. We have learned that lesson, and we have stopped giving our dog a bad name. We give him the best place in the house instead. We take him to ride in my lady's lap. We cover him with ribbons and caresses and all sorts of nonsense. A hundred times a day we fall down and worship before

the idol with a dog face. And when we rise from our knees we send the maid to find out what that "bad boy" is doing and to drive him out of the house.

We call men men. We call boys *bad* boys. If we treated our men as badly most of them would go to the bad. We have mercy on our men. We say, "Yes, but he's such a clever fellow;" and, "You know all of us have our weaknesses." But boys—boys are "unspeakable;" "they drive me mad;" "there's nothing to be done with them but nail them up in a barrel and feed them through a bung-hole." I don't wonder that some boys go wrong; I wonder that any of them go right—with all these things tingling in their ears.

Let us be fair with our boys. Some men go to the other extreme. They say boys will be boys, and they shut their eyes and wait quietly for youth to sow its wild oats. That, too, is unfair. My boy has a right to a fair chance. I have no right to call him a bad boy, but neither have I a right to deny him my daily care, my instruction, my warnings, my companionship. I cannot excuse my neglect of my boy by affirming that a boy must sow his wild oats. A boy does not have to sow his wild oats, but he is likely to sow them if I do not go along with him and show him how to sow good ones.

Look for the good in that boy. There's some-

thing better in him, believe me, than "scissors and snails and puppy dogs' tails." Your greatest hero was once locked up inside of a boy.

But do not expect more than you have a right to expect. I know a good man who has always held up before his boy a view of the Christ life such as only a mature saint could appreciate. That boy has utterly rebelled against religion and despises everything that is good. I know another man who has held up the same ideal before his children and insisted that one who did not reach that ideal was no Christian at all. It is hardly necessary to say that the children have grown up to be infidels. One or two of them in theory, all of them in practice. One might exercise a little common sense in these matters. Babes have a right to all the milk they need, and it is a shame to turn their little stomachs and imperil their lives with the strong meat that belongs to men. Whatever may be our own ideas or ideals we ought to remember that about the most idiotic thing one can do in teaching a child is to try to force him to see things that are beyond his range of vision. He should be encouraged to hitch his wagon to a star, of course; but pray give him a star that is in sight.

I know another man who is an ardent believer in the doctrine of non-resistance. He insists upon a literal interpretation of Christ's

command to turn the other cheek. He believes that there are no circumstances under which one is ever justified in resisting another; that when a man undertakes to defend himself he takes himself out of God's hands and shows that he no longer trusts God's loving care. This man also insists upon teaching this sort of thing to his pupils. The result is his boys have no more respect for religion than they have for a cry-baby. If it is religion to let a boy run over you—if it is religion to let all the boys in the neighbourhood make a foot-mat of you—then they don't want any—that's all.

Every boy believes in manhood, in courage, in grit, in square dealing, in standing pat. If you continually hold up before him the manliness of Christ the probability is he will learn to love Christ sooner or later; but if you insist upon picturing the Christian as a pale-faced fellow with a cotton string for a backbone, he will greatly prefer to be a pagan. I would not teach a boy that there are times when he can fight—he does not need to be told that, but I would never tell him that if he wants to be a Christian he must never fight under any circumstances. At thirty years of age, with the wisdom that you have and with the grace that God has given you, you do not find it difficult to keep out of trouble with your fellow men, and you know how to suffer rather than to

strike back. But just remember that you are thirty years of age, and that you see things as no boy ever saw them or can ever be made to see them so long as he is a boy.

Let me conclude this chapter with several important "don'ts."

1. Don't let those boys in your class get it into their heads that Jesus was sentimental rather than practical. For example, when you quote what the Master said about labouring for "the meat which perisheth" you want to remind your pupils that Jesus did not mean to discourage labour. On the contrary, He was discouraging idleness. He would have these men work for their bread, and not go roaming over the country expecting Him to feed them. He did not want a following of begging priests or pious tramps. Neither did He mean to teach that a busy life is incompatible with a spiritual life. At no time did He ever intimate that to be heavenly-minded we must have nothing to do with the earth; that a man should be too spiritual to handle money; that piety is opposed to perspiration; that we should be more concerned about paying attention to the preacher than about paying the debt we owe him. Bread is a good thing, but Jesus would have us learn that man must not live by bread alone. It is a means, not an end: it is not the principal thing. We need to know how to make it

without setting our hearts on it. Bread is for to-day: man is for eternity. If we work for to-day only, we are but worms; if we work for to-morrow, we are but bees; not until we work for eternity do we work as men.

2. Don't allow yourself to think too much about the rudeness of your boys. Nearly everything a boy does is rude in the eyes of a grown-up, and if you undertake to repress everything that appears rude in your class you will not be able to keep your mind on the lesson for a single moment.

3. Do not use a pretty girl teacher as a magnet to draw big boys to Sunday-school. It is like using a magnet to draw pins into a box. The pins will go in the box if the magnet goes in, but they will stick to the magnet, not to the box, and you cannot do anything with them while they are sticking.

4. In teaching boys be sweet but don't be sentimental. Be loving but don't be "confectionery," as the children say. Little girls can stand a good deal of sentimental stuff, but everything that is in a boy revolts from it.

5. Don't speak to a child as a child but as a companion. Don't let a boy think that you think of him as a little boy. What you want is to develop a sense of companionship, and you can't do this if the boy is made to feel that he is of another sort from you.

XXXIV

SOME BOY PROBLEMS

WHAT is the first thing to do with a bad boy?

The very first thing is to stop calling him a bad boy. No teacher who uses that phrase is likely ever to make any sort of a boy good. Let him understand that you do not think of him as other people do and that you don't propose that anybody shall call him a bad boy. Look for a single good point in him—you will find it somewhere—and tell him about it. Let him feel that you see something good in him. This is the first thing. And this is the most important thing.

What would you do with a boy who suddenly concludes that he will not go to church any more?

First, don't beg him to go. A boy likes *not* to do a thing he is begged to do. Second, don't tell him about what becomes of bad boys who don't go to church. He has enough curiosity to make the experiment. Third, ask the pastor to give him something to do at church. He can open the door; he can watch the thermometer; he can distribute notices or envelopes

or books in the pews; he can keep note of the absentees so that the pastor can look them up; he can locate strangers and tell the pastor about them; he can do a hundred and one things that are usually left undone. The important thing is to give him a specific object in going to church. What makes many a boy hate to go to church is that he has been told nothing but that it is his duty to go. A boy never likes to do a thing for which you cannot give a reason except to say that it is his duty.

"I find it impossible to get a hold on my class. They are the most uncontrollable boys I ever saw. What would you suggest?"

The only way to get a hold upon one's class is to get a hold upon the individual members of the class, one at a time. Every class has its leader, and the quickest way is to first get hold of the boy who leads the rest in disorder. Seek him out during the week and cultivate him, and when you have reached a point where you can safely claim him as a friend, have a little confidential talk with him and ask him to assist you in keeping order in the class. It is not such a difficult matter if you know how to win the heart of a boy.

"I want something for my boys to do during the week. What shall it be?"

If you would open your eyes you would not ask what it shall be, but rather what it shall

not be. For there is enough work around you to keep a dozen classes of boys like yours busy. If you cannot think of anything else take those boys over to the poor widow's house in the lane and let them cut her wood and clean up her yard. Anything that looks like helping somebody will do. Of course, cutting wood is unspeakably vile to the boy alone at home, but at the widow's house they will be ready to fight for the possession of the axe.

"My boys are in their teens and are beginning to feel a little ashamed of Sunday-school. What can I do to hold them?"

Treat them no longer as boys but as young men. Instead of patting them on the head give them a comrade's whack upon the shoulder occasionally. Get your illustrations from the every-day life of young men. Stress the manly virtues. Show an interest in everything that is manly. Don't look down upon them; look at them as if they were just as tall as you are—no more, no less. And spend more time praying for them than you ever spent before. There are other things you must do, but these are enough for a beginning.

What would you do with the unmanageable boy?

Nothing, of course; for how can I manage him if he is unmanageable? But I would be very slow to decide that he is unmanageable.

If you are sure you can do nothing with a boy you will do nothing with him. Better turn him over to a teacher who is not sure.

"My pupils have reached a stage where they seem to have little confidence in anything I say to them. They are always expressing doubt. What would you do?"

I would not take them too seriously. Boys in their teens are likely either to have doubts or to affect them. In either case it is a mere symptom, like the down on the upper lip. In due time it will give place to something else. Possibly if you will do all that you can to strengthen their confidence in your knowledge and judgment they will not find it so difficult to believe what you say.

Should a teacher be chosen for a class of boys who expresses an unwillingness to teach boys?

No. Nobody ever did anything with boys who either feared them or disliked them.

"What can I do to secure the respect of my boys? They don't seem to respect anybody or anything."

Do you treat them with respect?

"Do you believe it is possible to reform a boy who is at heart dishonest?"

I do not believe that he can be reformed, but I believe he can be regenerated. Reform has its possibilities, but it also has its limita-

tions. Because men have reformed a bent apple tree is no reason why we should hope to reform a decayed apple. What a bad boy needs is not reformation but regeneration.

Are not boys interested in stories of heroines as well as heroes?

Not until they are old enough to become interested in the sex to which heroines belong. A small boy is not interested in the things that girls or women do. He is only interested in the deeds of bigger boys and men.

Would you have a woman who is prejudiced against boys teach a class of boys if you could get nobody else?

No; I would break up the class and scatter the boys among other classes. Could anybody who is prejudiced against *you* teach *you* anything?

"How can I learn to love an unlovable boy?"

First, stop thinking of him as an unlovable boy. You will never learn to love him so long as you think of him as unlovable. Think of him as your boy, or, if you can, as God's boy put into your hands to be molded into the image of His Son. Second, get better acquainted with him. You may call a boy unlovable if you know him only as he appears on the surface, but the chances are that if you will go down beneath the surface you will find something in him worth loving. Third, do

something for him. Do a great deal for him. Seek opportunities to help him in every way. You know, we love most those we do most for, not those who do most for us.

XXXV

ADDITIONAL POINTS

IN getting ready for Sunday-school see that you have a good pencil, plenty of patience, a sheet of paper, a heart full of love, a handy Bible, and an abundant supply of common sense. Pardon the mention of that last item, but there are some very good people who imagine that while common sense is a very essential thing on Monday one has no need for it on Sunday, seeing that in all religious work the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. I wish every teacher could be persuaded to tie his Bible and his common sense so tightly together that he could never use the former without the latter. I know a minister who several years ago decided that ordinary common sense had no place in the study of so spiritual a book as the Bible, and the other day he announced that he would not conduct any more funeral services because he had been reminded by the Spirit that Jesus had told His disciples to let the dead bury their dead.

2. Disloyalty breeds disloyalty. If you are not loyal to your superintendent you need not

be surprised if at any moment your pupils should prove disloyal to you.

3. I wonder if the great need of your Sunday-school is not enthusiasm. I wonder if it does not want a good electric shock or a succession of good electric shocks. I wonder if the trouble is not with the teachers rather than with the pupils. I wonder if you have not too many men and women in your school whose only excuse for being teachers is that they are willing. And I wonder if you have not others who have five talents for their work who are using but one or none for the lack of enthusiasm to dig them up.

4. That teacher is doing the best work for his pupil who has given him a place in his heart next to his own children or brothers or sisters. How many people are dearer to you than your pupils?

5. The habitually late or irregular teacher in nine cases out of ten is late or irregular for one reason only. It is purely a matter of laziness, and there is but one thing that will cure laziness, and that is a motive. Laziness is simply a symptom of emptiness—emptiness of mind or of heart. Put an idea into the head of a sluggard and he will soon be on his feet. Fire his heart with a great ambition, and you will perform a miracle like that which transformed the dry bones of the valley into a

living army. I would not underrate any of the various methods and devices to secure better attendance which have been used with varying degrees of success, but we might as well understand at the outset that if a method or device is to be of any permanent value it must aim at putting ideas into the heads and motives into the hearts of the habitually irregular.

6. We have not too much of the feminine, but we have a great deal too much of the effeminate in our Sunday-schools. We want more vigour, more virility, more masculinity in our movements, our speech, our discipline. There are still too many superintendents and teachers who imagine that the whole Sunday-school is in pinafores and needs "mothering."

7. We might as well set up a tombstone at the head of a class as to keep in it a teacher whose pupils have discovered that his heart is not in his work.

8. Nothing has done more for the modern Sunday-school than the convention idea. But it is worth while to remind ourselves occasionally that Sunday-school work does not consist in going to conventions. The convention is for preparation and inspiration; the real work comes after it is over. A great many good people will sentence themselves to hard labour at our conventions and institutes next summer

and go home at the end with a satchel full of note-books all used up and a heart full of contentment over the thought that they have proved themselves worthy Sunday-school workers. And some of these good people will leave all their ideas in their note-books and go back to their Sunday-schools in the fall in the same old listless way. I know a man who won a great reputation as a Sunday-school worker by attending all the conventions for miles around, but he rarely attended his own Sunday-school. Let us go to conventions—let us go wherever a Sunday-school idea may be found—but let us not deceive ourselves with the idea that this is Sunday-school work. We go to conventions to get ready to work.

9. The teacher who finds fault with the superintendent is raising a lot of pupils to find fault with the teacher.

10. Cultivate the habit of carrying your lesson help in your pocket if you are a man, in whatever you may carry in place of a pocket if you are a woman. A prominent business man whose knowledge of the lessons for a long time excited my wonder told me that he had formed the habit of glancing at his "help" whenever he was waiting for a street-car, or was otherwise unengaged, and that as a consequence when Saturday night came he was always saturated with the lesson.

11. We waste so much precious time thinking about what we can do for our pupils in general. If we would only spend a while thinking about what we can do for some one pupil in particular!

12. The fact that you do not agree with your superintendent does not prove that he is in the wrong. Nor is it any reason why you should not give him your hearty support. You are not going to agree with the wisest and best people in the world in everything, but if you are wise you are going to take your stand with the wisest and best people regardless of your own ideas or feelings. You will do it for your own sake if for nothing more. Take your stand by your superintendent and let him feel the strength of your helping hand, not of your resisting fist. It will help you as much as it will help him. And it will help your class as much as it will help the school as a whole. You cannot weaken the authority of your superintendent in the school without weakening your own authority in your class. You cannot reflect upon him without inviting upon yourself like treatment from your own pupils.

13. Our pupils may step in our tracks with safety only as our footprints fall in with the footprints of Jesus.

14. Is your Sunday-school lesson story just as real to you as the morning paper? Do you

think of it as an actual record of events that actually occurred? Are its people real flesh and blood people? Ask these questions of your own heart before you go to the class and demand an answer. And don't go until you can give the right answer.

15. The teacher who is not assured of his own integrity is not the teacher to teach a class about matters of common honesty.

16. My friend Faintheart, who teaches a girls' class in the corner, is still consoling himself with the thought that if he fails it will be for lack of opportunity to succeed. Faintheart sits with his chair tilted against the wall and spends half of his time looking over the heads of his pupils at the rest of the school, and envying the opportunities of his fellow teachers. No doubt he is going to fail, but it will not be for lack of opportunity. It will be for lack of get-at-it-iveness to seize and use the opportunities that are flying around his class like swallows about a chimney.

17. The Sunday-school teacher should learn how to smile and forget how to giggle. One may smile at a very serious business—as did many a martyr at the stake—but one cannot giggle at it.

18. You will never do your best work in the Sunday-school so long as you are not perfectly sure that the Sunday-school work is worthy of

your best. This is the chief trouble—we are not perfectly sure about it. Some of us are not half sure. Some of us are so uncertain about it that we never go to Sunday-school without wishing that we could go all the way by a back street. We don't want to meet our distinguished friend, the professor, and the adorable Miss High Society, and have them discover that we are pious Sunday-school workers!

19. Is your piety of the type that makes little children fidgety in your presence?

20. The lesson is not going to mean more to your pupils than it means to you. You are not going to impart to them more than you get out of it for yourself. You are not going to bind the truth to their hearts if you do not first bind it to your own heart.

21. If a Sunday-school teacher was paid a salary would you employ a teacher for your school who did not know anything more about the art of teaching than some Sunday-school teachers you know? If not, why not?

22. Do your pupils feel that you love them during the week as well as on Sunday?

23. It is a good thing to win the confidence of those we would teach in our ability; it is better to win their confidence in ourselves. It is best to win both.

24. Teaching is a personal matter. If you do not make the lesson a personal matter with

yourself, you are not going to make it a personal matter with your pupils. If you study the lesson simply because you have to teach it, your pupils will study the lesson—if they study it at all—simply because they have to recite it. It is vain to hope that you are benefiting your pupils if you are not getting any benefit yourself.

25. Very small children can take a good deal of genuine gush. When a boy is old enough to know that it is gush he is utterly repelled by it. A girl will detect it earlier, perhaps, but for a while can stand it better. Whatever you do don't gush over a boy who has passed his tenth year.

26. Don't expect to set the hearts of your pupils on fire if your own heart is not on fire. And don't expect your own heart to be on fire if you never furnish any fuel for the flame. If you want to go to your class at white heat you must find time to read. Thinking comes of reading and fire comes of thinking.

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